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THE DEADLY
HANDS OF
KUNG FU
NO. 15 \$1.25
**SUPER
ANNUAL
ISSUE**

THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FUTM

**SHANG-CHI!
IRON FIST!
BRUCE LEE!**



MARVEL

**A COLLECTOR'S EDITION
OF THE BEST IN
MARTIAL ARTS ACTION!**

**STAN
LEE**
presents

THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU™



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that, not just other comics companies, but *novelists* and *screenwriters* should attempt to follow.

Rick Garrett
Box 47
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Thanks guys — Mike, Rick — for taking time out to give us those much needed (we're not going to deny it) pats on the back. And, Rick, "Mr. McGregor" says "call me Don." (we're all terribly informal around here).

But, hey guys, what about our ever-lovin' senses shattering strips? Sure, short letters are fine and dandy, but that's two thirds of the mag about which we still don't know what you liked or disliked. We're not mind readers, ya know.

However, this was the general pattern with most of the mail, comments concentrating on the Bond article... and, as stated earlier, response was overwhelmingly positive. But, forthwith, we'd like to present two letters that put forth a reasonable opposing view (one of the film, one of the actual *type* of article) that we felt would be of interest to all...

Dear Mr. Goodwin,

Once upon a time there existed a Marvel magazine devoted to the martial arts with related graphics. It was a good; honest effort which was filled monthly with exciting stories and articles about a unique way of life.

Then one issue, something very sad happened. While the strips themselves improved constantly, the articles and very soul of DEADLY HANDS were being victimized. Suddenly the magazine became a soap-box for would be philosophers and began to lose its direction. Rather than interviews like the David Brownridge piece or Frank McLaughlin's historical tid-bits, we were deluged by innane movie reviews.

Cases in point —
Vol. 1, Number 11. The *Billy Jack* issue.

Great Neal Adams cover, nice inner strips. Fine and dandy. Then two articles on the *Billy Jack* movies which went into great depth about the *Billy Jack* philosophy of peace but ignored the martial arts segments completely. I don't give a damn-what *Billy Jack*'s politics are, I'm concerned with his fighting skill! Whether the films were bad or brilliant is totally irrelevant; yet Mr. McGregor seemed to think his critical analysis better suited your magazine than a close look at the actual *Hapkido* used in those movies.

BORING!!
Vol 1, No. 12. Neal Adam's humorous cover says it all. DEADLY HANDS has become a joke.

Inside we find super art by Gray Morrow, Rudy Nebres etc. But there's McGregor again, this time rambling on about what makes a good James Bond movie. I hate to startle you folks but just because a flick has some martial arts in it *does not* make it a martial arts movie! MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN was not a flick that should have been covered in DHKF!

Of course you could have really worked and done a report on the professionals who staged the fights in that movie. What kind of style they employed, etc. But no, you felt we needed more wordage about a bad flick!

Well fellas I've about had it. I mean, I am a karate student who first tuned into your scene because you were doing a good thing. Hell, once DHKF was a book any martial artist would have enjoyed reading.

Now I hope it isn't too late to save the whole project.

I consider you, Mr. Goodwin, one of the better comics editors in the business today. Your past record has demonstrated a talent for innovative publishing with a basic sincerity to provide your readers with the best you can produce.

Let's see some of that integrity return in DEADLY

HANDS. Bring martial arts back to the book or else I fear you'll soon have nothing left but a cheap fan mag and heaven help us there are enough of those around.

Ron Fortier
13A Water St.
Somersworth, NH 03878

Ron, we decided to query your comments directly to John Warner, who is articles co-ordinator for DEADLY HANDS. John replies:

"I was only a proofreader on the book at the time (yeah, blame me), but Don and I talked about both the BILLY JACK issue (#11) and the JAMES BOND issue (#12). It was never intended that such a radical format change be permanent for the magazine. It was meant only as an *experiment*, trying out something that hadn't really been done (leastwise, not quite in that way). Also, though I didn't ask at the time, I'm sure Don (or any of us, for that matter) wouldn't want to use anything, even something with unanimous approval, to establish a monthly formula (read that "*rut*") for the magazine. (I'm not meaning to slight then-articles-editor Dave Kraft — he has now gone on to other things, but he's the one responsible for putting DEADLY HANDS on the road, in terms of articles, to being that "book any martial artist would have enjoyed reading.")

"The magazine is weird to select material for. You see, we have two basic groups of readers — our regular and devoted comics readership and an equally devoted martial arts (practitioners) audience, who may or may not be comic readers, that somehow stumbled onto us somewhere between *Fighting Stars* and *Inside Kung Fu*. Naturally, there are many who fall somewhere in-between those two extremes. But it *is* a very wide and highly diverse (not to mention outspoken) following. I personally feel, speaking only for myself, that we *owe* it to that audience to spread ourselves as wide as possible and, while certain controls are needed to keep this diversification in check, experimentation is important to DHOKF's longevity.

"To those comics die-hards who claim no interest in the martial arts except as an action gimmick, no, we will not replace the articles with a strip. We can't, economically, afford that many pages of artwork. But, frankly, I'm glad. I think that the technically-oriented texts enrich the strips by providing background while reviews and analyses direct you to other martial arts action-entertainments that may be of interest.

"Ron, I agree that martial arts and the realistic portrayal there-of is an important aspect of the magazine that should never be discarded — the forms, the people, the motives involved in this "unique way of life." And I think that we've finally begun to amass a stable of writers who can produce such articles with first hand knowledge as well as respect; respect without gratuity. (No, I'm not a hypocrite, I hope... I'm well aware that these were the very merits *lacking* from most of *my* early articles for this book.)

Coming up is an interview with Jhoon Rhee, the controversial *Tae Kwon Do* master, a factual look at martial artists fighting Castro in Cuba back around the time of the Cuban missile crisis and an article by a man who taught Bruce Lee nunchaku techniques in exchange for Lee's speed techniques. And Don will be doing an in-depth analysis of THE YAKUZA.

I really didn't intend for this to become a mini guest-editorial. It seemed, however, like a good opportunity to let people know where the articles go from here. I invite both comment and suggestions. It also seemed to be a more reassuring way to tell you, Ron, that with the next issue Dauntless Don returns as Editor of this magazine.

But Archie will still be here, as Editor-in-Chief and guiding force for us all. After all, it was that same "would-be philosopher" who was responsible (along with D.K. and then-guiding-force Marv Wolfman) for

the David Brownridge interview and keeping Frank McLaughlin busy on those special illustrative features!

C'mon! Give the lad a chance!"

Friends:

I'm amazed, astonished really, but with the last 3 or 4 issues, DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU has gone from an obligation to the point where I look forward to with *unbridled enthusiasm!!* DEADLY HANDS # 12 really put you over the top.

The covers on all of Marvel's black and white's have been of pretty high quality recently, as opposed to those you were printing when you were first getting started. This one was no exception. I implore you to get the elusive Mr. Adams as frequently as possible.

Moving to Shang Chi, I am very happy with the direction you are presently taking with this series. Shang-Chi's past appearances in DHOKF were meandering with little or no connection between each successive issue. At last, with the institution of a serial format, the series will have a direction that, while different from the one currently in the color series, is not completely divorced from it. To top it all off, it seemed to be a pretty well written and entertaining first episode. I'll be back in six months to tell you if the plot held up. Here's hoping!

Another thing I liked very much is Rudy Nebres' art. I liked Mike Vosburg's art, but it's better suited for a horror or super hero strip. Rudy's stuff, while not perfect, looks to get better as he becomes more familiar with Shang-Chi.

Don McGregor's article on James Bond was well written and a lot of fun to read. But then, isn't *everything* Don writes? I like centralized articles like in these past two issues, in lieu of a lot of the karate stuff, which I'll have to admit doesn't really thrill me. Try to keep Don on those film reviews because *nobody* writes film reviews the way Don does.

However, the very best this ish was "The Crack of the Whip" starring Abe Brown. First off, good premise; three successive solo adventures for the *Tigers Sons*. Secondly, great execution.

Remember, a few years ago, how Steve Englehart sorta snuck up on people? How he wrote a few secondary features and turned 'em into instant classics within a few brief months? And Steve Gerber did somethin' pretty similar? Well, my new nomination for Marvel scripter supreme is Bill Mantlo. Before he wrote it, I *hated* Sons of the Tiger. I considered it the very worst Marvel series being published, and I read 'em all. When I first came across Bill's name on the credit line, I thought: "Omighod, this series is so bad, none of the regular writers will touch it. Now they've got a *colorist* filling in the balloons!" *Then* I read the story and it's been all uphill since. To Mr. Mantlo, my sincere apologies for committing the sin of pre-judgement.

This episode was perhaps his best yet. I liked Blackbyrd *very* much, and would like to see him again. Mantlo's dialogue is very authentic, and his situations very rarely mundane. George Perez's artwork is excellent, and while it wasn't quite as flashy as it has been in the past, it was all in spirit with the nature of the story. Believe me, with a team like Mantlo and Perez, ably assisted by the Tribe, the Sons of the Tiger will continue to be a winner.

Fred Hembeck
280 Stockbridge
Buffalo, NY 14215

Fred, from Blushing Bill and Pacesetter Perez — in fact, from all of us — thank you. No controversy here, but, ya know, it's nice, after all, to settle back and take a look at things in general. We kind wish we'd received a few more letters like yours, even if they'd been pans. See, much as we enjoyed all the "crossfire" on the James Bond article, we'd really liked to have known what people thought of the new look in Shang Chi and if the others were as enthusiastic about the Tiger's Sons as you. Not that we didn't get some, we could have used more.

Bill and George (and all of us) want to keep pleasing *you*, the reader. You have a voice... use it! (Mebbe we ought to haul out that shot of Castle Dracula's plumbing we were going to put in DRACULA LIVES. *That got response!*)

READERS' POLL

readers poll

Okay, all the votes are in and counted, so here are the tallies...

FIRST PLACE: THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN SHOOT'S BLANKS by *Don McGregor* placed the lead by about a one-third lead over...

SECOND PLACE: BLOOD OF THE DRAGON, the first episode of a six episode epic composed by *Doug Moench* and realized by *Rudy Nebres*. And not ver far behind is...

THIRD PLACE: THE CRACK OF THE WHIP by *Bill Mantlo, George Perez & Tony DeZuniga*. However, in this case, it is a very relative third place. No one seemed to make many complaints at all this issue.

Come on, WRITE! Let us know what *you* want!

The address is:

DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU
Marvel Magazine Group
575 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Don:

Your review of MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN in DEADLY HANDS OF KUN FU # 12 was excellent. I saw the movie and everything you said was absolutely correct. Seems to me that Chris Lee should stick to biting necks. It's a good thing his gun wasn't silver. Anyhow, thanks for a good review.

Michael Bembower
Box F
Atlanta, New York 14808

Dear Marvel:

I have been a Marvel fan for years and I always felt that your staff and I shared many similar opinions. But I did not realize *HOW* many until I read Don McGregor's in-depth review of THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN. Finally, here was a review of James Bond movie that was written by a true Bond fan instead of the usual run-of-the-mill critics (most of whom are probably interior decorators in their spare time.) Before I read Mr. McGregor's review I thought that my family and I were the only people who noticed the countless changes (the lack of a true sense of danger, the missing use of fast cuts in fight scenes, Bond's newly acquired smoking and drinking habits, just to name a few) that have occurred in the James Bond movies.

I agree with Mr. McGregor that the suave, cool super-spy genre is not dead and should not be treated as such. James Bond could still be as exciting and entertaining in the seventies as he was in the sixties. (Especially in view of the fact that trash like CHINATOWN, THE EXORCIST, THE GOD-FATHER, THUNDERBOLT AND LIGHTFOOT, and THE FRENCH CONNECTION make up most of 007's

competition now as opposed to the sixties when action-adventure movies were made more often.) Other than the late, great Bruce Lee's pictures, or the all too rare appearance of a flick like THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, action-adventure has been nearly replaced by arty junk.

Mr. McGregor touched on so very many valid, intelligent, well-explained points that it would be impossible to touch on them all. However, if I may, I would like to cover a few.

1) I was so glad to read that somebody finally had the guts to ask what the hell Sheriff Pepper is doing in a James Bond movie. Let *Archie Bunker* stay on *All in the Family* (a show I do not find entertaining!).

2) Why must they give us all these stupid chases? They were boring in THE FRENCH CONNECTION so who needs them?

3) Back when *The Saint* was on t.v. I thought that Roger Moore might be able to play Bond. (certainly not like Sean Connery, but then again, *nobody* could play the part the way he did.) But so far Bond is being handled more like Brett Sinclair than Simon Templar. At this rate, no one will ever know if Moore *can* handle playing the REAL James Bond unless the staunch 007 fans unite and get Tom Mankiewicz (the current Bond writer) kicked out. (Personally I would like to see Mr. McGregor write a Bond movie. He has a terrific understanding of the character.)

As I have stated, I do not have the room here to touch on Mr. McGregor's article point by point but I want very much to thank him for writing it and you for bringing this review to print. Your comics and magazines continue to set the kind of high standards-

Stan Lee
PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!** TM

MIDNIGHT BRINGS DARK DEATH!

"I STAND IN THE CHILLED EVENING BREEZE SLIPPING THROUGH THE REMNANT OF NATURE NEW YORKERS NAME **CENTRAL PARK**, PREPARING TO WELCOME MUCH-NEEDED **SLEEP** BESIDE A QUIET, WELL-GROWN **OAK**."

"THIS '**PARK**' IS MY HOME NOW, SINCE I LEFT THE ABODE OF MY **FATHER**, THE **MANDARIN FU MANCHU!**"

"YET, IN **THIS HOME**, I HAVE NO SAY OVER WHO MAY **VISIT ME--**"

"-- AND I FEAR THAT I WILL BE FORCED TO **FOREGO** MY REPOSE, TO TURN **INSTEAD** TO MY SKILL WITH THE **MARTIAL ARTS--**"

"--MY SKILL WITH **KUNG FU!**"

FEATURING
CHARACTERS
CREATED BY
SAX
ROHMER

STEVE ENGLEHART • JIM STARLIN // AL MILGROM // TOM ORZECOWSKI, LETTERER // ROY THOMAS
AUTHOR ARTIST CO-ARTIST LINDA LESSMANN, COLORIST EDITOR

WILL YA **LOOK** AT THAT DUDE, MR. CLEAN?

HE'S ALL DECKED OUT IN ONE'A THOSE FANCY **TOGAS**-- LIKE THOSE **SLANT-EYES** IN THE MOVIES OVER ON **42ND STREET**.

YEAH, RIPPER-- AN' HERE I THOUGHT YA HADDA PAY **CASH MONEY** TO SEE ANYBODY DRESSED LIKE THAT!

DUDE MUST THINK HE'S PRETTY **BAD** TO WEAR THAT THING! I WONDER **HOW BAD**!

HA! RELAX, MAN! I WAS **THINKIN'** I MIGHT MAKE THE SLANT EAT SOME DIRT--

-- AN' **LOOK!** HE'S **ALREADY** DOWN ON HIS KNEES MUNCHIN' SOME **WEEDS!**

"THE PLANTS WHICH GROW IN THE SOIL OF THIS BEFOULED CITY CONTAIN MANY **IMPURITIES**, YET CERTAIN OF THEM ARE **NUTRITIOUS**-- AND I DO NOT BUY FOOD.

HEY, CREEP!

"I WISH ONLY TO END MY DAY WITH **TRANQUILITY**."

DON'T YA KNOW CENTRAL PARK'S **DANGEROUS** AFTER DARK?

THERE'S **MUG-GERS** OUT HERE!

"MUGGERS?" I DO NOT KNOW THE **TERM**.

IT MEANS GUYS WHO **HURT** PEOPLE, SLANT-- MAYBE EVEN **KILL 'EM!**

NO ONE MAY KILL ME.

"THE BALD ONE'S **SWEAT-ODOR** SUDDENLY INCREASES **SHARPLY**. HIS **CHAIN** MAKES THE SOUND OF A LARGE **BEE** AS IT CUTS THE AIR.

NO?

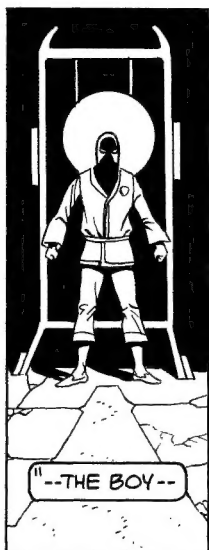
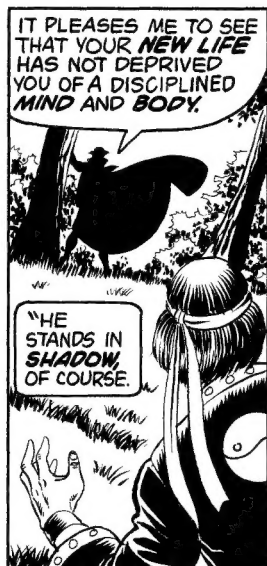
POK!

"I THRUST MY HEAD FORWARD A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LATE."

NO.









"THERE ARE NO **FIRMER** FRIENDSHIPS THAN THOSE FORMED BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE FORGING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE SAME **ADVERSITIES** TOGETHER. MINAI'S AND MY UPWARD PROGRESS THROUGH SCHOOL MADE US **INSEPARABLE**--



"--UNTIL SIX DAYS AGO, WHEN I WAS SUMMONED BY MY **FATHER**-- FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. PETRIE, WHICH **BEGAN** MY NEW LIFE.

"AS FAR AS **UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD** AND **SKILL WITH THE MARTIAL ARTS** IS CONCERNED, I COULD BE **HE** AND **HE** COULD BE **I**.



BUT WHY DID HE **FLEE** FROM ME?



WHY DID I **FLEE** FROM HIM?



HE IS MY **ONLY FRIEND**, YET I FOUND I COULD NOT **FACE HIM!**

YOUR FINELY-HONED **SENSES** TOLD YOU HE IS **NO LONGER** THE SAME **SHANG-CHI** YOU KNEW, **MIDNIGHT**.

I ASKED YOU TO USE YOUR **UNIQUE ABILITIES** TO DISCOVER HIS **PRESENT LOCATION** SO THAT YOU WOULD **KNOW THAT!**



I **UNDERSTOOD** THAT YOU WOULD **FEEL** HIS **BETRAYAL** OF ME TO MY **OPPRESSORS**--

--YOUR **OPPRESSORS!**

YES, BUT-- HE IS MY **FRIEND!** I HAVE KNOWN THOSE WHO WERE **MORE SKILLFUL** THAN I, AND SO **TAUGHT** ME THEIR **SKILLS**--

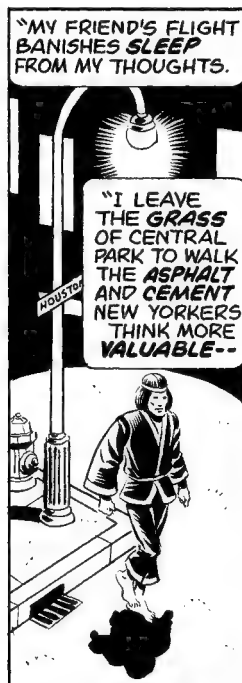
--THOSE WHO WERE **LESS SKILLFUL** THAN I, AND SO **FELL** BEFORE ME--

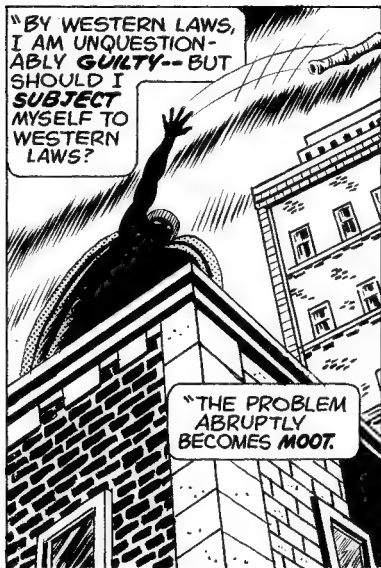
--AND A **HANDFUL**, INCLUDING **SHANG-CHI**, WHO WERE MY **EQUALS**--

-- BUT I HAVE KNOWN **ONLY ONE FRIEND**, AND IT IS **HE!**



YOU ALSO KNOW **ONLY ONE MASTER**, **MIDNIGHT**-- AND IT IS **I!**





"SCENES MARCH
IN MY BRAIN,
UNBIDDEN.



"IN ONE, M'NAI STANDS
OVER MY LIFELESS BODY.
IT IS AN UNHAPPY THOUGHT.



"AND IN BETWEEN
ARE THE HALF-
BREED BOY AND
THE BLACK BOY,
WARMING EACH
OTHER WITH
FRIENDSHIP.

"IN ANOTHER, I STAND
OVER M'NAI'S LIFELESS
BODY. IT IS A TERRIBLE
THOUGHT.



"BUT I MUST NO
LONGER THINK
OF BOYS. I MUST
THINK OF
MEN.

"THE SOUTHERN
SECTION OF
MANHATTAN
ISLAND.



"THOUGH NEW YORK
IS A CITY WITHOUT
REPOSE, THIS AREA
SEEMS ENTIRELY
EMPTIED AFTER
DARK.

"IT LOOMS WITH
GREAT GRAY WARE-
HOUSES, AND
TWISTS WITH SUDDEN
ALLEYWAYS THAT MELT
AWAY THE MIDDLE
OF BLOCKS.



"IN ANY DIRECTION,
I HEAR ONLY MY
HEART.

"BUT NOW, A SHADOW--



"--HURLED INTO
ENORMITY AGAINST
A ROTTED BUILDING'S
WALL BY SOME LOW-
LYING LAMP AROUND
THE CORNER.

"I SLIP FORWARD,
THE COOL WIND MAKING
MORE SOUND THAN MY
PASSAGE --BUT NO
ONE IS THERE.



"NOW
ANOTHER
SHADOW,
FARTHER
UP AN
ALLEY.

"ALL OF MY TRAINED
SENSES FUNCTIONING
FULLY, I GLIDE INTO
THE WAITING DARK,
SEARCHING...



SNAP

"BEHIND
ME!



"HE STEPS OUT SOLIDLY,
A LIVING SHADOW IN
A REALM OF SHADOWS.

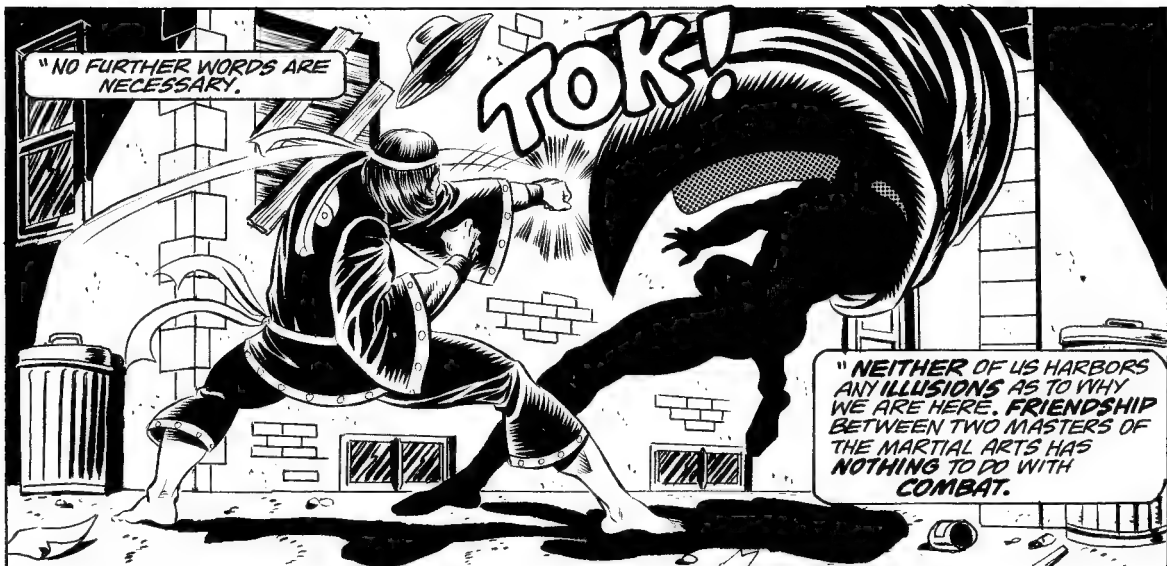


"FAR AWAY,
ACROSS WATER,
A CLOCK TOLLS
MIDNIGHT.

I SEE, MY BROTHER,
THAT YOU HAVE COME
TO DIE.

NO,
M'NAI. I
HAVE COME
TO LIVE.





"NO FURTHER WORDS ARE NECESSARY."

TOK!

"NEITHER OF US HARBORS ANY ILLUSIONS AS TO WHY WE ARE HERE. FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO MASTERS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH COMBAT."



"BUT IN THINKING OF SUCH THINGS NOW, I DO DWELL UPON OUR FRIENDSHIP INSTEAD OF OUR FIGHT... TO MY COST."



"HE BREATHES LIGHTLY, SURPRISE THAT HIS FOOT DID NOT FIND ME IN THE CLOAK IS EVIDENT IN HIS STANCE."

YOU RECOVER QUICKLY, SHANG-CHI. I AM NOT DISAPPOINTED.



"HE SPEAKS! THE MENTAL PRESSURE OF OUR DUEL AFFECTS HIM AFTER ALL."

"I AM DISAPPOINTED. THIS WILL IMPROVE MY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL -- BUT I EXPECTED BETTER FROM M'NAI."

ARE YOU YET A MASTER OF WEAPONRY?

"HE KNOWS I COME PREPARED. MY NUNCHAKU WHIZZ FREE EVEN AS THE ALLEY WALLS RETURN THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE."



"HE STRIKES WELL. I RECOIL WELL. HE MISSES."

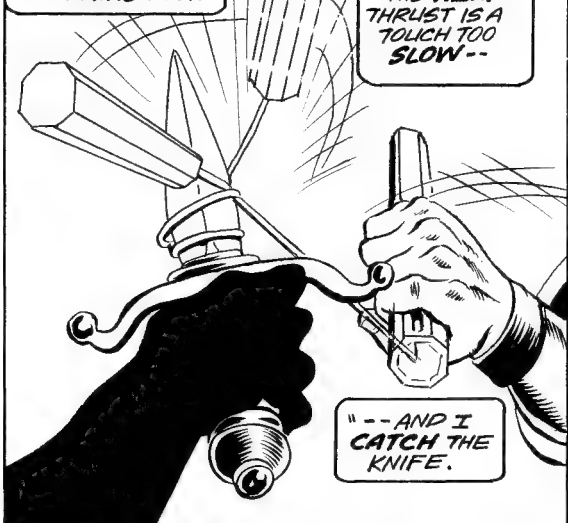


"I STEP AROUND THE BLADE AS HE RECOVERS HIMSELF, SMASHING HIM FOUR TIMES RUNNING WITH THE ON-SWEEPING MOTION OF MY ARM."



"IT PAINS HIM."

"HIS NEXT THRUST IS A TOUCH TOO SLOW--"



"--AND I CATCH THE KNIFE."

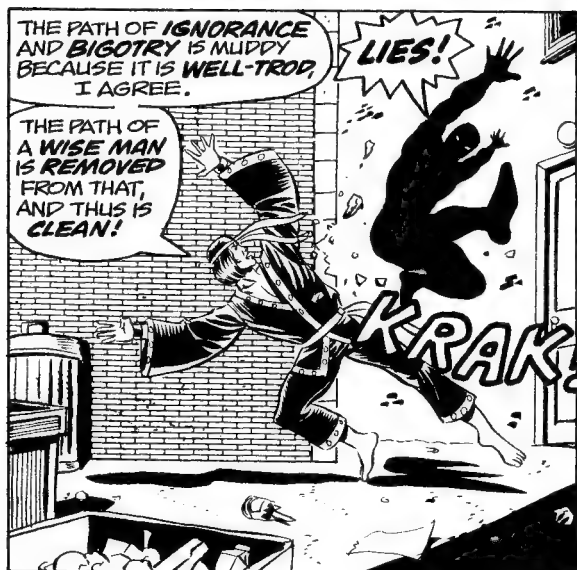
"A TWIST TO PULL IT FROM HIS HAND, AND NOW--"

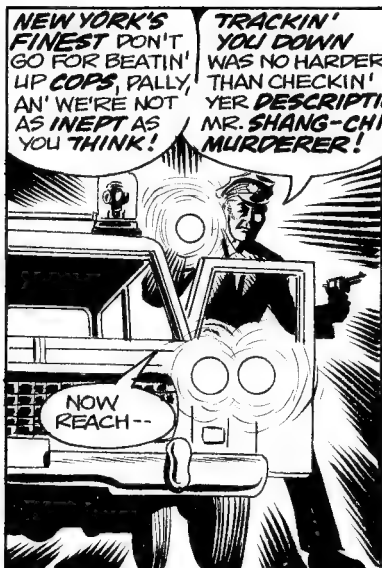


WEAPONS WERE A MERCY OF A SORT, SHANG-CHI. IN UNARMED COMBAT, I SHALL BE YOUR SUPERIOR--



-- FOR YOUR PATH IS NEW TO YOU, AND MINE IS AS OLD AS MY MEMORIES!





NEW YORK'S
FINEST DON'T
GO FOR BEATIN'
UP *COPS*, PALLY,
AN' WE'RE NOT
AS *INEPT* AS
YOU *THINK*!

TRACKIN'
YOU DOWN
WAS NO HARDER
THAN CHECKIN'
YER *DESCRIPTION*,
MR. *SHANG-CHI*,
MURDERER!

NOW
REACH--



I SHALL
FIND YOU
LATER, MY
BROTHER.

HEY!



WELL, I'LL BE--!
THE KID'S GOT
GUTS, AT ANY
RATE!

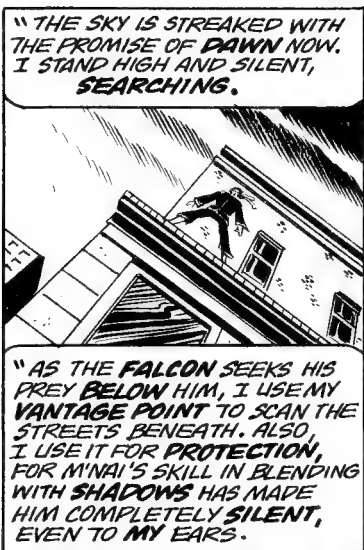
OKAY,
BOSTON
BLACKIE--AT
LEAST I
COLLARED YOU,
SO LET'S--

BUT, BOY, AM I
GONNA GET THE
HORSELAUGH
BACK AT THE
STATION!



HOLY
CROW!

HE'S
GONE,
TOO!

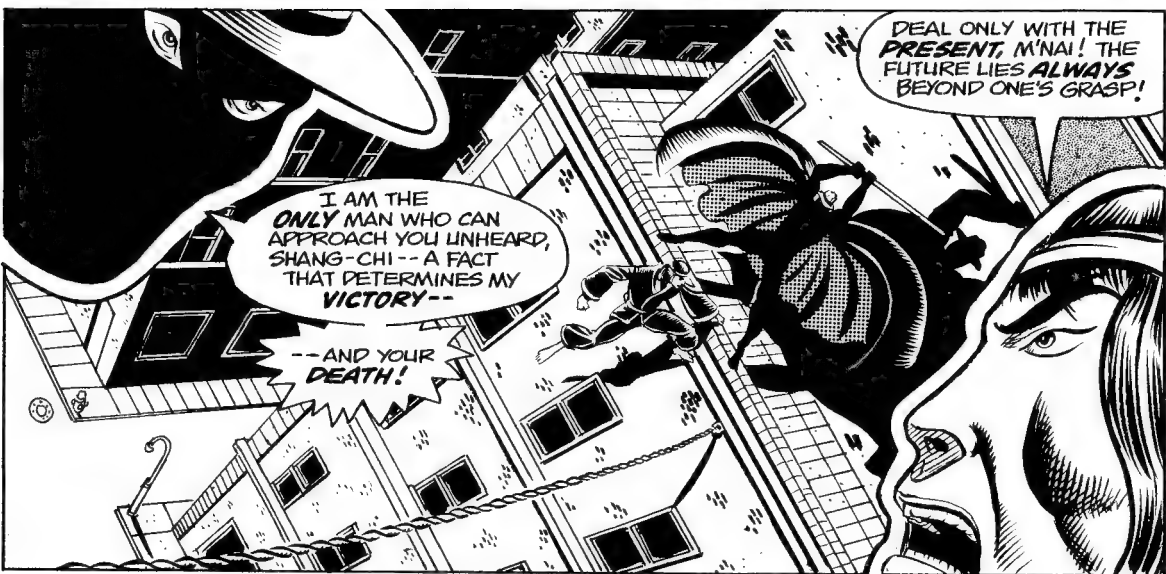


"THE SKY IS STREAKED WITH
THE PROMISE OF *DAWN* NOW.
I STAND HIGH AND SILENT,
SEARCHING."

"AS THE *FALCON* SEEKS HIS
PREY BELOW HIM, I USE MY
VANTAGE POINT TO SCAN THE
STREETS BENEATH. ALSO,
I USE IT FOR *PROTECTION*,
FOR M'NAI'S SKILL IN BLENDING
WITH *SHADOWS* HAS MADE
HIM COMPLETELY SILENT,
EVEN TO MY EARS."



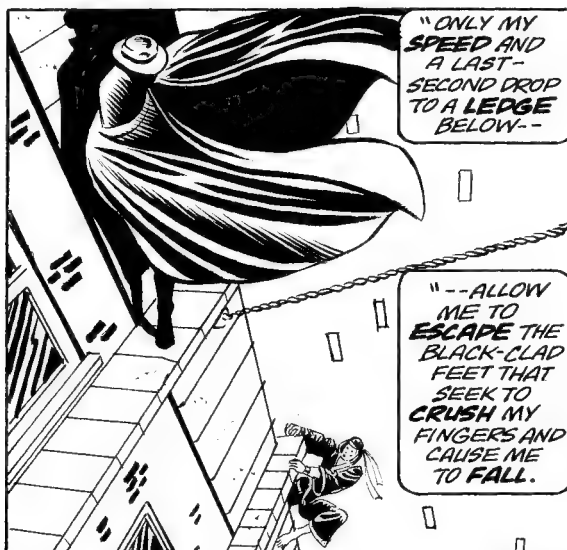
WOK!



I AM THE
ONLY MAN WHO CAN
APPROACH YOU UNHEARD,
SHANG-CHI--A FACT
THAT DETERMINES MY
VICTORY--

--AND YOUR
DEATH!

DEAL ONLY WITH THE
PRESENT, M'NAI! THE
FUTURE LIES *ALWAYS*
BEYOND ONE'S GRASP!



"AN ANSWERING THUD
ANNOUNCES MIDNIGHT'S
ARRIVAL."

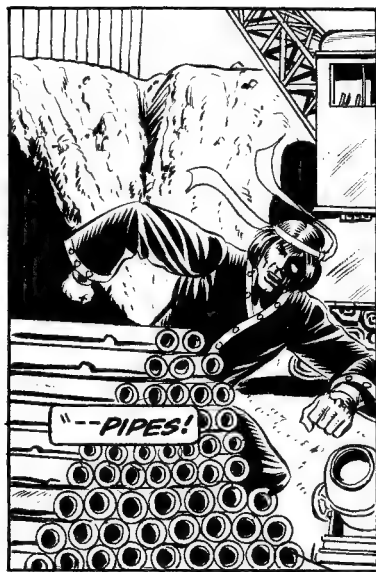


SURRENDER,
SHANG-CHI!!
DO NOT
PROLONG
THIS
FURTHER!

"A CONSTRUCTION
SITE! THERE MUST
BE --



"--PIPES!"



NOW, MIDNIGHT--NOW
WE SHALL FACE EACH
OTHER **EVENLY** MATCHED!



YOU--NO LONGER CALL ME BY MY GIVEN NAME!
YOU CALL ME BY MY **NOM DE GUERRE**, MY
BROTHER!

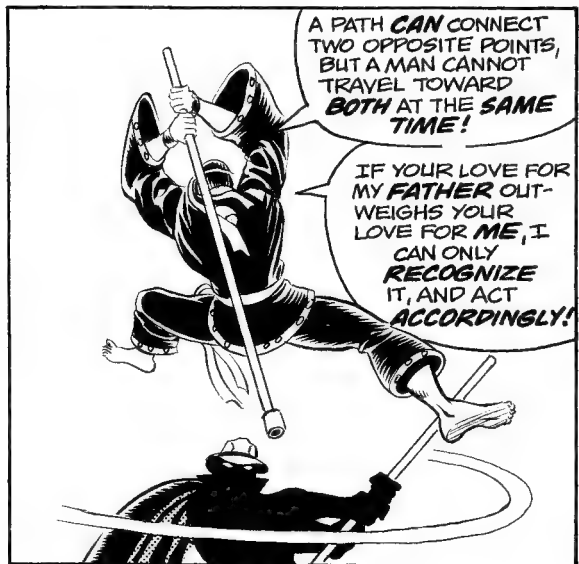
GIVEN NAMES ARE FOR
FRIENDS, MIDNIGHT.

YOU
HAVE
FORFEITED
OUR
FRIENDSHIP!



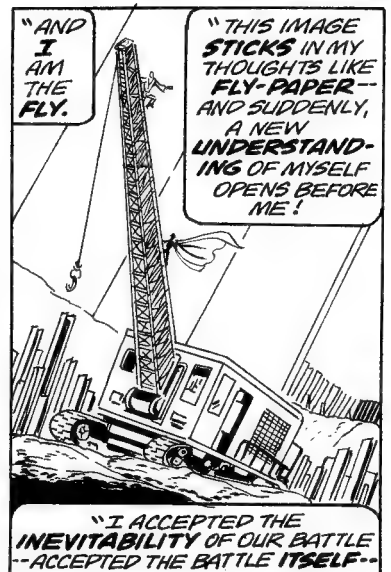
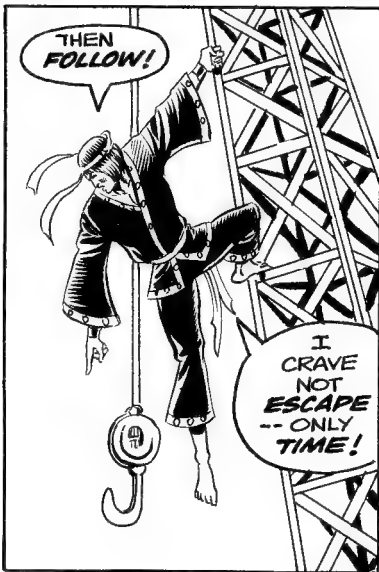
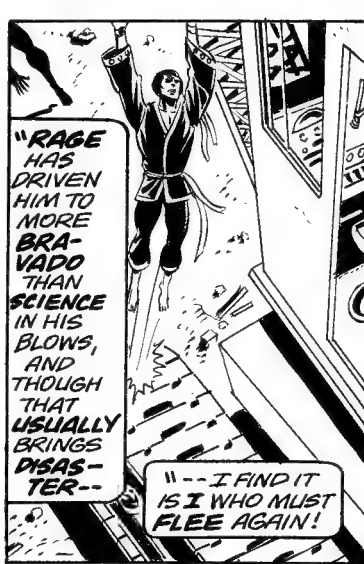
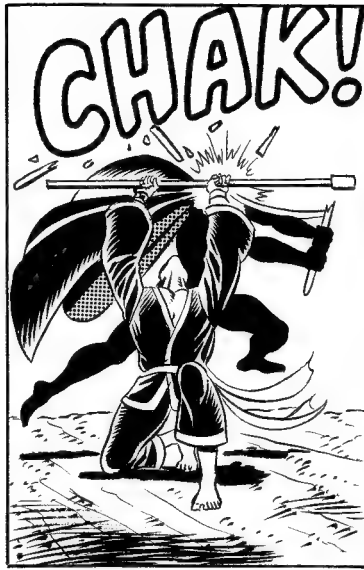
A PATH **CAN** CONNECT
TWO OPPOSITE POINTS,
BUT A MAN CANNOT
TRAVEL TOWARD
BOTH AT THE **SAME**
TIME!

IF YOUR LOVE FOR
MY **FATHER** OUT-
WEIGHS YOUR
LOVE FOR **ME**, I
CAN ONLY
RECOGNIZE
IT, AND ACT
ACCORDINGLY!



TONG!





A black and white comic book panel showing Spider-Man in a dynamic pose, clinging to a large, circular, web-like structure that is part of a collapsing building. He is wearing his iconic suit and mask. The structure is made of many thin, radiating lines, resembling a giant spider web or a complex mechanical part. Below him, the ground is a chaotic scene of rubble, debris, and twisted metal. A large, rectangular object, possibly a piece of machinery or a vehicle, is partially visible in the lower right. The overall tone is dramatic and action-packed.

"-- BUT I NEVER **TRULY** ACCEPTED THE **DEATH** AT BATTLE'S END!

"I SAID I DID -- **THOUGHT** I DID -- BUT THE CONCEPT OF ACTUALLY **KILLING** M'NAI REMAINED ONLY A **CONCEPT**, NOT A **POSSIBILITY**!

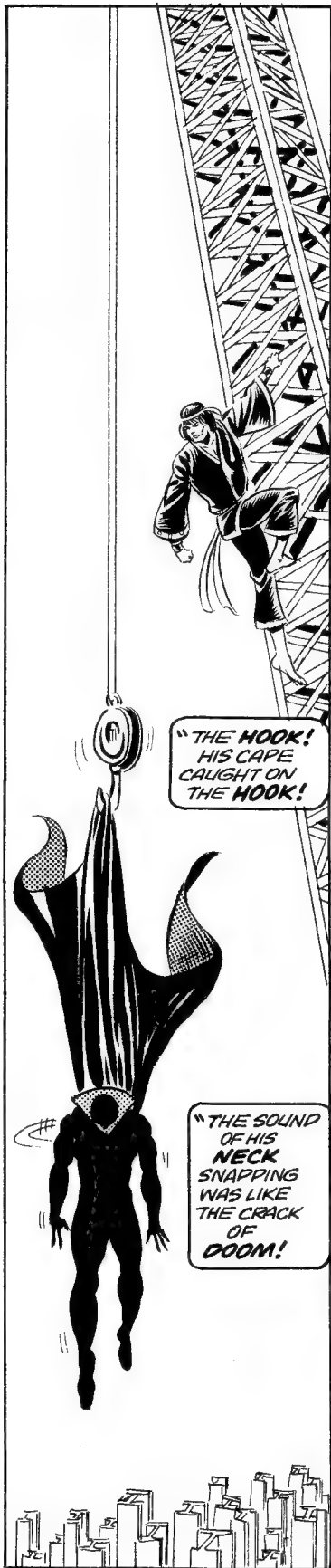
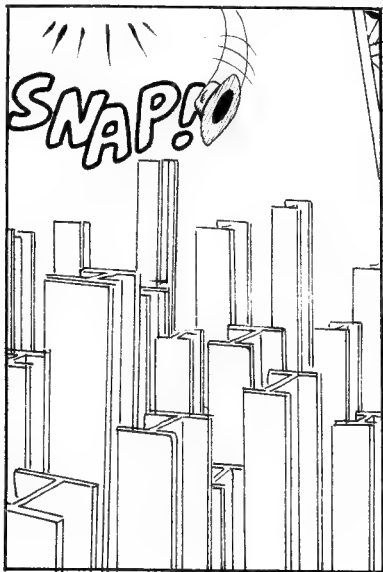
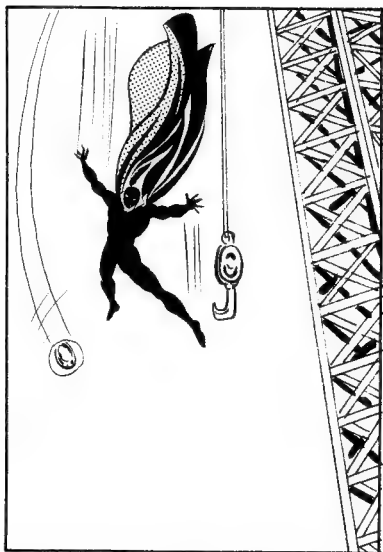
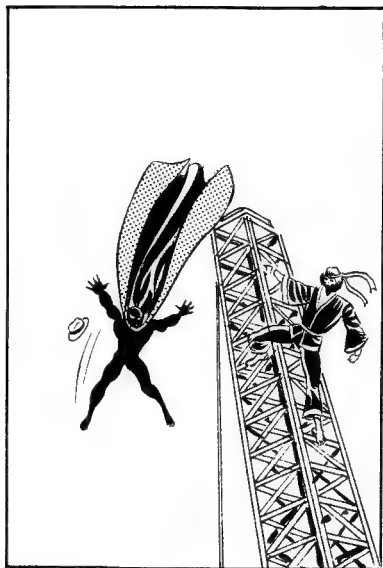
"I HAVE NEVER FELT THE **DEATH-POWER** IN MY LIMBS TONIGHT! I HAVE STRUCK TO **INJURE**, TO **DISABLE** -- BUT NEVER TO **DESTROY**! AND THUS, I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE THAN THE **FLY**, HOWEVER **BRAVELY** I BUZZED!

"BUT **MIDNIGHT** HAS BEEN THE **SPIDER** -- AND ONCE **MORE**, WHILE I CHASED MY THOUGHTS, HE HAS TAKEN THE **ADVANTAGE**--

"-- SCUTTling UP THE **OTHER** SIDE OF THE **WEB** TO A **POSITION** ABOVE ME!

"YET I SEE MY **WEAKNESS** NOW. I **ACCEPT** IT -- AND **SUBDUE** IT!





"I CLIMB **NUMBLY** FROM MY PERCH. STRANGELY -- OR PERHAPS **NOT SO STRANGELY**-- A **THOUGHT** SLIPS UNCALLED FROM THE **PAST**."



"I ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE HIS **FACE**, TO SEE WHAT **DROVE** HIM."

"NOW IS MY **CHANCE**, I KNOW. I HAVE ONLY TO **CLIMB** AGAIN, AND **PULL** HIM TO ME --"

"-- BUT EVEN WITHOUT THE **SEEING**, I NOW **KNOW** THE **SCARS** THAT **PLAGUED** HIM."



"FARE-
WELL,
M'NAI...
MY
BROTHER!"



NEXT: THE RETURN OF SIR
DENIS NAYLAND SMITH
AND
THE LAIR OF THE LOST!

Stan Lee
PRESENTS: **IRON FIST, THE LIVING WEAPON!**™

LEN WEIN * DICK GIORDANO * GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST * ROY THOMAS * AND INTRODUCING THE
WRITER * INKER * L.P. GREGORY, LETTERER * CO-PLOTTER/EDITOR * PULSE-POUNDING PENCILLING
OF LARRY HAMA!

HEART OF THE DRAGON!

YOU ARE IRON FIST--
AND THE ODORS THAT
ASSAULT YOUR TENDER
NOSTRILS THIS NIGHT
FILL YOU WITH A
GROWING FEELING
OF REVILSION.

YOU HAVE HEARD MANY
STORIES OF THIS STRANGE
PLACE CALLED NEW YORK--
THIS CITY THAT IS HARDLY
MORE THAN A MEMORY
TO YOU--

--AND, UNFORTUNATELY,
IT SEEMS THAT ALL
THE TALES ARE TRUE.

STILL, YOU DRAW UPON
YOUR INNER RESOURCES--
CLOSE YOUR WELL-HONED
SENSES TO THE OFFEN-
SIVENESS THAT SURROUNDS
YOU--AS YOU CONCENTRATE
ONCE MORE UPON YOUR
MISSION--

--FOR YOU HAVE COME TO
THIS MUCH-BEGRIMED
METROPOLIS TO KILL A
MAN--AND YOU CANNOT
REST UNTIL THE DEED
IS DONE!

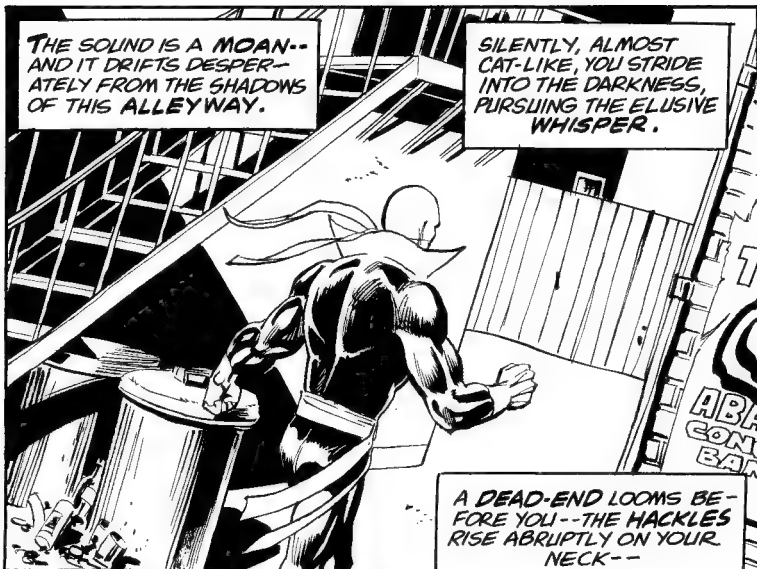


IN YOUR MIND'S EYE, YOU SEE HIS FACE--AND FURY GROWS WITHIN YOU AT THE SIGHT OF IT--



--BUT IT IS FURY CAST QUICKLY ASIDE--AS A SOUND INTERRUPTS YOUR GRIM REVERIE.

THE SOUND IS A MOAN--AND IT DRIFTS DESPERATELY FROM THE SHADOWS OF THIS ALLEYWAY.



SILENTLY, ALMOST CAT-LIKE, YOU STRIDE INTO THE DARKNESS, PURSUING THE ELUSIVE WHISPER.

A DEAD-END LOOMS BEFORE YOU--THE HACKLES RISE ABRUPTLY ON YOUR NECK--

--AND YOU CURSE YOURSELF FOR A FOOL TO HAVE WALKED SO WILLINGLY INTO A TRAP!

LOOKIN' FOR SOMETHING, PAL?

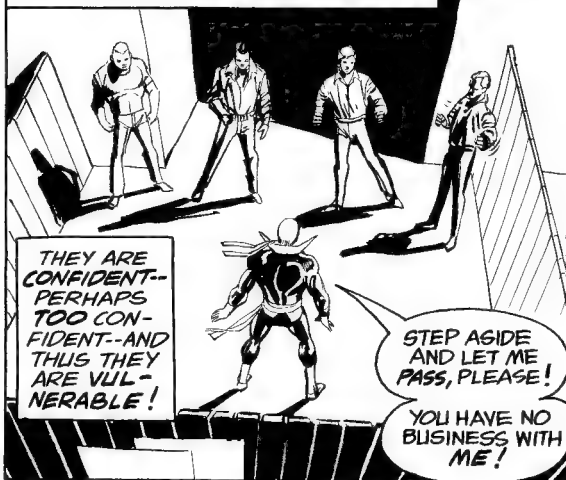


YOU HAVE SEEN THEIR TYPE BEFORE--THE LOW, SLOPING BROWS--THE CRUEL TIGHTNESS AT THE CORNERS OF THEIR EYES...

THEY ARE CONFIDENT--PERHAPS TOO CONFIDENT--AND THUS THEY ARE VULNERABLE!

STEP ASIDE AND LET ME PASS, PLEASE!

YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH ME!



WRONG, FRIEND--WE GOT TEN G'S WORTH'A BUSINESS WITH YOU.

--DEAD OR ALIVE, IT SAYS--

SOME BIGSHOT PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON ANY DUDE WEARING THIS DRAGON BRAND--



--AN', BUDDY, WE AIM TO COLLECT THAT DOUGH--ANY WAY WE HAVE TO!

THEY COME AT YOU WILDLY, WEAPONS FLASHING IN THE DIM LIGHT--





YOU CALM
YOURSELF
INWARDLY...



--THEN MEET SLASHING PIPE AND KNIFE--
BLADE WITH THE SKILLS FEW MEN
SAVE YOU HAVE MASTERED.



WEAPONLESS, YOUR
ASSAILANTS ARE
HARDLY A MATCH--

--FOR A WELL-PLACED
ELEPHANT KICK--

--OR THE BLOW OF
THE HAMMER.



YOUR TWO ATTACKERS SPRAWL TO
THE GROUND--AND ARE INSTANTLY
REPLACED
BY THEIR
COM-
PANIONS--

--BUT A LOCKING BLOCK TURNS ASIDE
THE BAYONET STROKE OF ONE ...

--WHILE A BEAR THRUST STEALS
AWAY THE BREATH OF THE OTHER.

THE SWORD HAND
CONVINCES THE FINAL
AGGRESSOR TO TOSS
HIS BLADE ASIDE --



--AND PERHAPS HIS IN-
VOLUNTARY SCREAM
IS WHAT PREVENTS YOU
FROM HEARING THE
FOOTSTEPS BEHIND
YOU--



--UNTIL IT IS FAR TOO LATE!

YOU STUMBLE TO YOUR KNEES, YOUR HEAD REELING FROM THE PAIN--



--AND THE
MEMORIES
COME FLOOD-
ING BACK
UNBIDDEN.

AGAIN, YOU ARE THE **BOY**
YOU WERE TEN YEARS
AGO. AGAIN, YOU ARE
AFRAID--

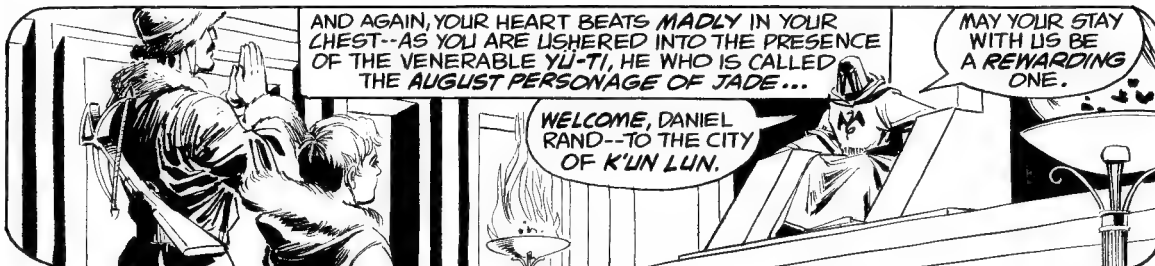
--AND AGAIN, YOUR
INNOCENT'S EYES
GROW WIDE AS
YOU FIRST BEHOLD
THE MOUNTAIN CALLED
K'UN LUN.

AGAIN, YOU
REMEMBER THE
AWE YOU FELT
AS YOU PASSED
FOR THE FIRST
TIME THRU THE
ANCIENT CITY'S
GATES--



--THE FEELING THAT YOU
WERE ENTERING NOT A
CITY, BUT A **FANTASY--**
AND THAT TO **DISBELIEVE**
IN THE DREAM WOULD
SURELY BE **SACRILEGE.**

AND AGAIN, YOUR HEART BEATS **MADLY** IN YOUR
CHEST--AS YOU ARE USHERED INTO THE PRESENCE
OF THE VENERABLE YU-TI, HE WHO IS CALLED
THE **AUGUST PERSONAGE OF JADE...**



WELCOME, DANIEL
RAND--TO THE CITY
OF **K'UN LUN.**

MAY YOUR STAY
WITH US BE
A **REWARDING**
ONE.

WE KNOW OF YOUR FATHER'S
FATE, MY SON--AND THE FATE
OF YOUR **MOTHER** AS WELL--
AND OUR HEARTS **GRIEVE**
OPENLY FOR THEM!



TO LOSE ONE'S
PARENTS IS TO
LOSE THE ROOTS
OF **HERITAGE.**

STILL, WE SHALL TRY TO
MAKE YOU **HAPPY** HERE,
DANIEL!

IF THERE IS
EVER ANY-
THING YOU
WANT,
MERELY
NAME IT--



--AND IT WILL
BE **YOURS!**

THERE'S ONLY
ONE THING **I**
WANT, MISTER...



**I WANT
REVENGE!!**

YOU REMEMBER THE **SORROW** THAT SEEMED TO FILL THE AUGUST ONE'S EYES AS HE LED YOU FROM THE TEMPLE TO A SPRAWLING, SUN-LIT **COURT...**

YOU ASK THE ONE THING WE CANNOT GIVE, MY SON--FOR **REVENGE** IS A WEAPON THAT CUTS **TWO WAYS** AND CUTS **DEEP**. IT MUST NEVER BE GIVEN AS A **GIFT**.

BUT PERHAPS WE CAN GIVE YOU **ANOTHER** GIFT, MORE PRECIOUS AND MORE LASTING BY FAR!

THIS IS **LEI KUNG**, THE THUNDERER. IF YOU ARE **WILLING**, DANIEL, HE WILL **TUTOR** YOU--IN THE **WAYS** OF THE **MARTIAL ARTS**!

PERHAPS IN STRENGTHENING YOUR **BODY**, YOU WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR **SPRIT** AS WELL--AND THUS TURN YOUR **HATRED** ASIDE.

YOU ACCEPTED YU-TI'S OFFER--**GLADLY**.

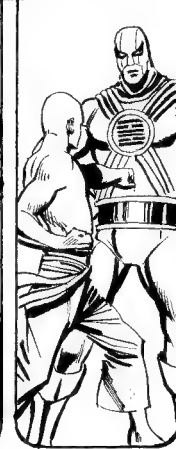
YOUR TRAINING WILL BE **VIGOROUS**, MAN-CHILD--

--EVEN **TORTUROUS** AT TIMES!

BUT IF, BY CHANCE, YOU PROVE **EQUAL** TO THE TASK--

--YOU WILL KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO WEAR THE **CROWN OF FU-HSI**--
THE **KING OF VIPERS**!

THE NEXT YEARS SEEM TO FLY BEFORE YOUR MEMORY'S EYE: **LEI KUNG** DEVOTES HIMSELF TO YOU--AS YOU DEVOTE YOURSELF TO YOUR STUDIES--AND UNDER THE THUNDERER'S TUTELAGE, YOU GROW SUPPLE, STRAIGHT--
AND **STRONG**--



--AND THIS IS AS IT **SHOULD** BE--FOR YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE ANYTHING LESS THAN **PERFECT**.



AT LAST, YOUR **SIXTEENTH BIRTH-DAY** COMES...

--AND YOU STAND SILENTLY BEFORE THE **GLOWERING SERPENT-KING**.



FOR YEARS, HE HAS SEEMED TO **MOCK** YOU--**SCORN** YOU--

--BUT NEVER AGAIN AFTER **TODAY**.



RESPECTFULLY, YOU **ADDRESS** HIM--

--THEN YOUR EYES **NARROW**--

--YOUR HAND **MOVES**--



--AND YOU KNOW AT LAST HOW IT **FEELS** TO WEAR THE **CROWN OF THE KING**.

IT FEELS **HOLLOW**!







YOUR ASSAILANTS ARE NOT INTELLIGENT MEN--BUT EVEN THEY QUICKLY REALIZE THAT NO REWARD IS WORTH SUCH SKILLFULLY-INFLICTED PAIN.

THEY FLEE--

OKAY, FREAK, SCORE ONE FOR YOU--BUT YOU AIN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS!



AND YOU STAND, BATHED IN THE SWEAT OF YOUR EXERTION, WONDERING WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN OF YOUR COMING--

--AND PLACED SUCH A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD.

THEN, FINDING NO ANSWERS, YOU SURVEY YOUR INJURIES... BONES INTACT--BRUISES SUPERFICIAL--



--AND, ALMOST ACCIDENTALLY, YOUR FINGERS BRUSH THE DRAGON BRANDED ON YOUR CHEST--THE DRAGON THAT MARKED YOU TO THESE MEN.



YOU CONSIDER THE DRAGON--THEN NOTICE YOUR WEAPON--HANDS--

...AND AGAIN THE MEMORIES COME...



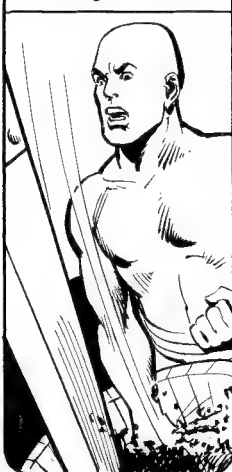
YOUR HANDS: YOU WORKED DILIGENTLY TO CONDITION THEM AS LEI KUNG SAID YOU MUST--



--THRUSTING THEM CEASELESSLY INTO A DEEP TUB OF SAND--TO BUILD THE CALLUS AND DEADEN THE PAIN--



--AND, WHEN THE SAND WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH, INTO GRAVEL--

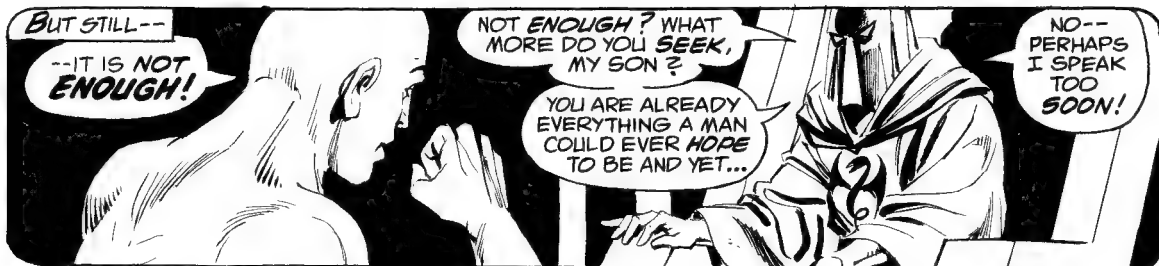


--AND, AT LAST, INTO BUCKETS OF ROCK--



--UNTIL YOUR HANDS BECAME AS THE ROCK--UNFEELING, IRRESISTIBLE--





BUT STILL--

--IT IS **NOT ENOUGH!**

NOT ENOUGH? WHAT MORE DO YOU **SEEK**, MY SON?

YOU ARE ALREADY EVERYTHING A MAN COULD EVER **HOP**E TO BE AND YET...

NO-- PERHAPS I SPEAK TOO **SOON!**



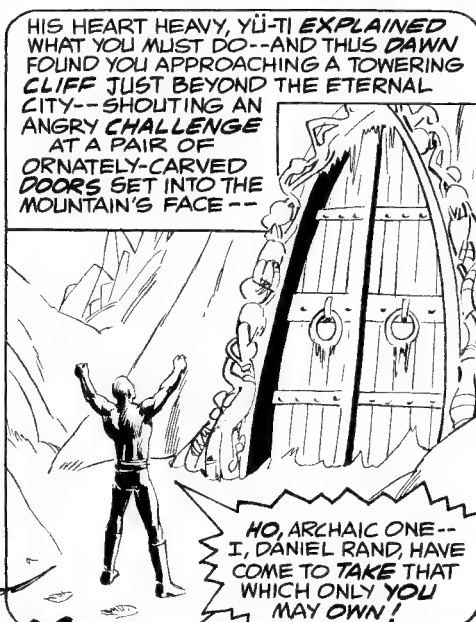
THERE IS ONE THING **MORE** YOU MAY ATTEMPT TO **GAIN** WHAT YOU DESIRE--

--BUT THE **PERILS** INVOLVED BY FAR OUT-WEIGH THE **REWARD!**

ARE YOU READY TO RISK **DEATH** TO GAIN THE POWER OF--THE **IRON FIST!**



I...AM **READY!**



HIS HEART HEAVY, YÜ-TI **EXPLAINED** WHAT YOU MUST DO--AND THUS **DAWN** FOUND YOU APPROACHING A TOWERING **CLIFF** JUST BEYOND THE **ETERNAL CITY**--SHOUTING AN **ANGRY CHALLENGE** AT A PAIR OF **ORNATELY-CARVED DOORS** SET INTO THE MOUNTAIN'S FACE--

NO, ARCHAIC ONE-- I, DANIEL RAND, HAVE COME TO TAKE THAT WHICH ONLY YOU MAY OWN!



--A CHALLENGE QUICKLY ANSWERED BY THE ONE WHO DWELT BEHIND THE **DOORS**--

--THE FIRE-BELCHING SERPENT-THING CALLED **SHOU-LAO**, THE UN-DYING--

--THE DRAGON-LORD ETERNALLY CON-DEMNED TO GUARD THE **MOLTEN HEART** THAT HAD LONG AGO BEEN **TORN** FROM ITS BODY--

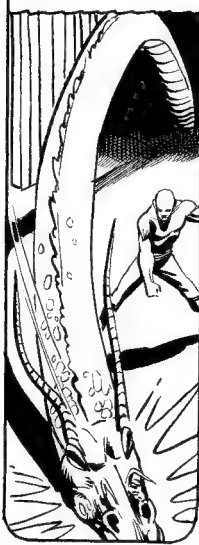
--THE **BUBBLING, GLOWING, MOLTEN HEART** THAT YOU HAD COME TO **FIND**--

THE GREAT HORNED HEAD LUNGED FORWARD, UNBEARABLE BREATH SEARING THE FLESH OF YOUR CHEEK--



--AS YOU LEAPT TO ONE SIDE, DELIVERING A DEVASTATING ROCK-SMASH BLOW--

--WHICH STUNNED THE LINDYING ONE AS INTENDED--



--BUT FOR ONLY AN INSTANT--



--AFTER WHICH YOU FOUND YOURSELF FACED WITH THE SAME NIGH-IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEM:

HOW DO I DEFEAT A CREATURE WHO CANNOT BE KILLED?

FOR A MOMENT, YOU PONDERED THIS--



--THEN, A SILENT PRAYER UPON YOUR LIPS--

--YOU HURLED YOURSELF BOLDLY AT THE STRANGELY-SHAPED SCAR UPON THE DRAGON-LORD'S BREAST--

--FOR IT WAS THRU THIS SCAR THAT SHOU-LAD'S HEART WAS TAKEN--



--THRU THIS SCAR THAT THE UNDYING ONE RECEIVED THE MYSTIC EMANATIONS THAT ETERNALLY SUSTAINED HIM--

--AND IF THOSE EMISSIONS WERE TO BE SOMEHOW BLOCKED OFF--

--BY A BODY, PERHAPS?--



--BY YOUR BODY--

--THEN WHO COULD SAY WHAT MIGHT OCCUR?

THE HEAT POURING FROM THE SCAR WAS ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE AND THOUGH YOU COULD FEEL THE FLESH BLISTERING ON YOUR CHEST--



--STILL YOU MAINTAINED YOUR HOLD--

--UNTIL UNCONSCIOUSNESS HAD CREEPED ALMOST UPON YOU--

--AND THEN--ABRUPTLY--YOUR PERSEVERANCE WAS REWARDED--





--BUT YOUR EFFORTS HAD INDELIBLY MARKED YOU TILL THE END OF YOUR DAYS.



STILL, YOU HAD TRIUMPHED-- AND THUS HAD EARNED THE RIGHT TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE!



THE CAVERN WAS NOT DEEP-- AND THE STENCH OF DECAY THAT POURED FROM IT SWEEPED ACROSS YOU LIKE A WAVE!

DETERMINEDLY, YOU SHOOK YOUR HEAD--TOOK ONE LONG LAST CLEAN BREATH--THEN STRODE INTO THE DARKNESS--

--AND FOUND IT A DARKNESS BROKEN BY THE LIGHT FROM A HIDEOUSLY-CARVED BRAZIER STANDING IN THE CAVERN'S CENTER--A BRAZIER THAT BUBBLED AND PULSED AS IF IT HAD A LIFE OF ITS OWN--

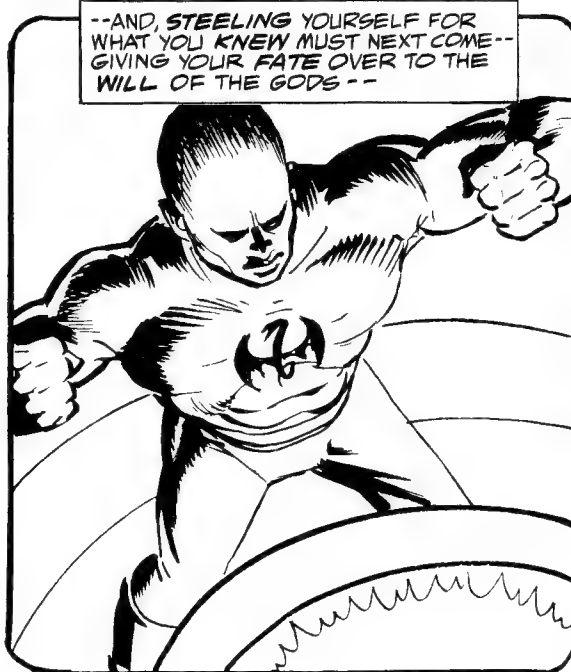
--AND, IN TRUTH, IT DID--

--FOR YOU BEHELD AT LAST, THE LIVING, BEATING SOUL OF SHOU-LAO, THE UNDYING--

THIS WAS THE HEART OF THE DRAGON!



RESPECTFULLY, YOU APPROACHED THE SEETHING MASS--BOWED TO IT GENTLY--THEN RAISED YOUR HANDS IN SALUTE--



--AND, STEELING YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU KNEW MUST NEXT COME-- GIVING YOUR FATE OVER TO THE WILL OF THE GODS--



--YOU PLUNGED YOUR OPEN HANDS AGONIZINGLY INTO THE GLOWING MOLTEN ESSENCE--

--AGAIN--AND AGAIN--AND AGAIN--



--AND WHEN FINALLY YOU PULLED THEM FROM THE DRAGON'S HEART--

--THEY FAIRLY SEEMED TO SHINE!



BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, FINDING THE **EXTENT** OF YOUR NEWLY-GAINED POWERS WAS **SECONDARY** TO FINDING **RELIEF** FOR YOUR **SMOLDERING HANDS**.

EAGERLY, YOU **STAGGERED OUT** INTO THE **WELCOMING SNOW** AND...

--SOMETHING **INTRUDES** UPON YOUR **MEMORIES**...

A **SOUND**--
A **GROWING SHADOW**--



--AND YOU ARE NO **LONGER ALONE** IN THE **ALLEYWAY**!



THANKS, **JOKER**--
FOR **SAVING ME** THE **BOTHER** OF **HUNT-ING** YOU **DOWN**!

THOSE OTHER **PUNKS** TOLD ME YOU WERE IN THE **NEIGH-BORHOOD**--
TOLD ME WHAT YOU **DID** TO THEM--

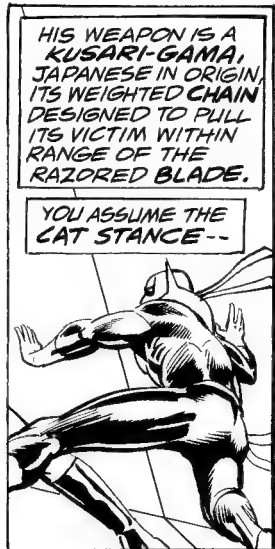
--BUT YOU WON'T HAVE A **CHANCE** TO TRY YOUR **TRICKS** ON--
SCYTHE!

I **DO NOT** WISH ANY **TROUBLE**!



MAYBE **NOT**--BUT YOU'VE GOT IT!

YOU'RE WORTH **TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS** TO THE **MAN** WHO BRINGS YOU IN!



HIS **WEAPON** IS A **KUSARI-GAMA**, JAPANESE IN ORIGIN, ITS **WEIGHTED CHAIN** DESIGNED TO **PULL** ITS **VICTIM** WITHIN **RANGE** OF THE **RAZORED BLADE**.

YOU **ASSUME** THE **CAT STANCE**--



--SENSE THE **SPEED** OF THE **STUDDED STEEL BALL** AS IT **HURTLES** TOWARDS YOUR **HEAD**--

--AND FOR THAT KIND OF **MONEY**, I DON'T **PLAY GAMES**!



--AND, AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, YOU SNAP YOUR HEAD ASIDE!



HEY, YOU'RE GOOD, JOKER-- EVEN BETTER THAN THOSE MUSCLE-BOUND MORONS MADE YOU OUT TO BE--

--BUT NOBODY CAN AVOID MY GRAPPLE-BALL FOREVER--



--AND JOKER-- THAT INCLUDES YOU!!

YOU SPIN AWAY-- A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LATE!

THE WEIGHTED BALL CAROMS OFF YOUR SHOULDER--



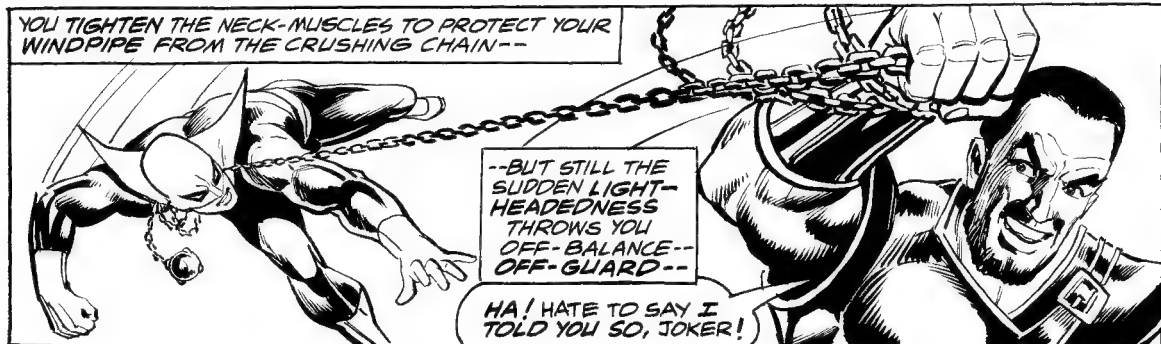
--AND YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN--

--DULLING IT-- SLOWLY DEADENING IT COMPLETELY--

--A PROCESS WHICH TAKES ONLY A MOMENT--



--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, A MOMENT IS ALL THAT SCYTHE NEEDS!



YOU TIGHTEN THE NECK-MUSCLES TO PROTECT YOUR WINDPIPE FROM THE CRUSHING CHAIN--

--BUT STILL THE SUDDEN LIGHT-HEADEDNESS THROWS YOU OFF-BALANCE-- OFF-GUARD--

HA! HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO, JOKER!



--AND AS DARKNESS THREATENS TO PULL YOU DOWN FOREVER, THE MEMORIES COME ONCE AGAIN...

ONE WEEK PAST: IT IS YOUR DAY OF DESTINY. YOU STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF YU-TI AND THE LUNG-WANG-- THE FOUR DRAGON-KINGS-- AS THE AUGUST ONE ADDRESSES YOU--

ARE YOU READY, MY SON, TO BE CHALLENGED--

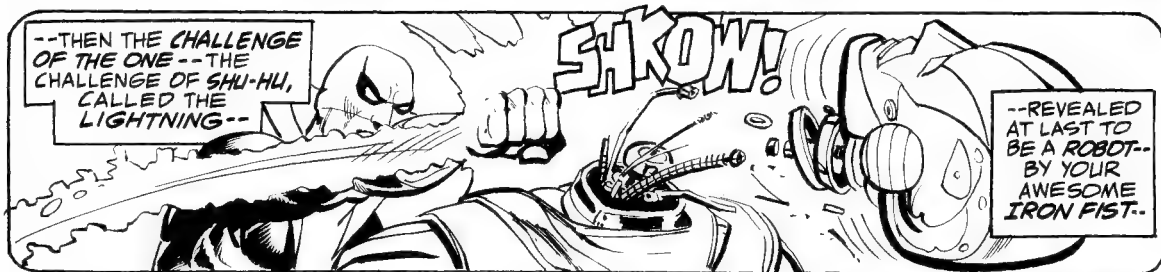
--TO PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY OF JOINING THE COMPANY OF IMMORTALS?



I HUMBLY AWAIT YOUR PLEASURE, O FATHER-HEAVEN.



THUS YOU MET THE CHALLENGE OF THE MANY-- FOUR MARTIAL-ARTS MASTERS WHO FELL LIKE BRITTLE CHINA DOLLS BEFORE YOU--



--THEN THE CHALLENGE OF THE ONE--THE CHALLENGE OF SHU-HU, CALLED THE LIGHTNING--

SHU-HU!

--REVEALED AT LAST TO BE A ROBOT-- BY YOUR AWESOME IRON FIST--



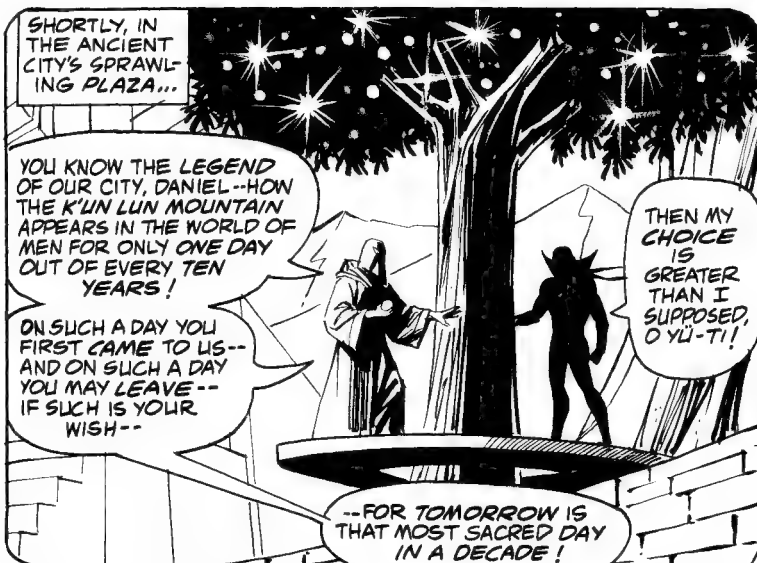
--AND FINALLY...

MY SON, YOU HAVE WON THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ETERNAL LIFE

--AND DEATH!

I AM READY, HOODED ONE!

THEN COME WITH ME, DANIEL RAND-- TO THE TREE OF IMMORTALITY!



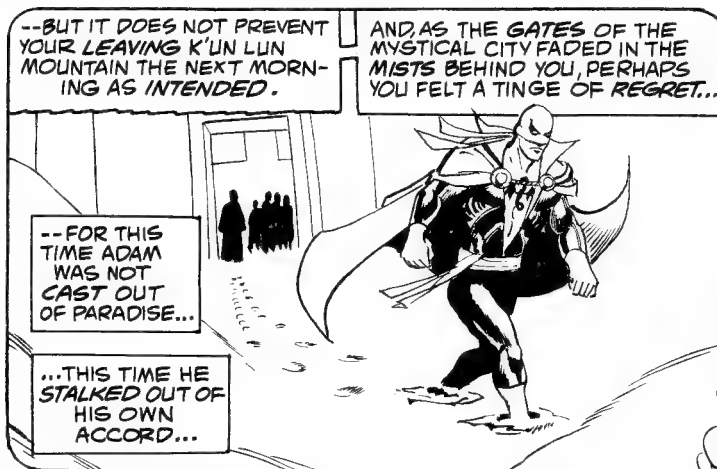
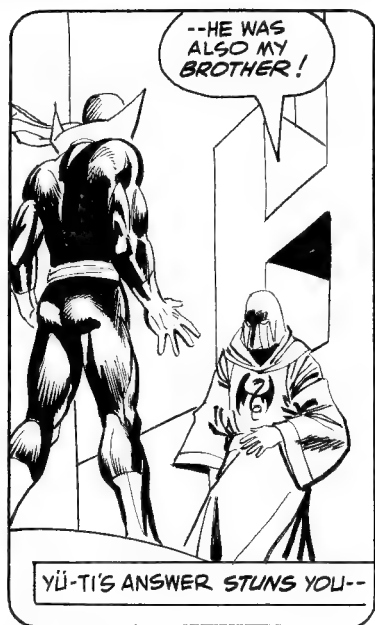
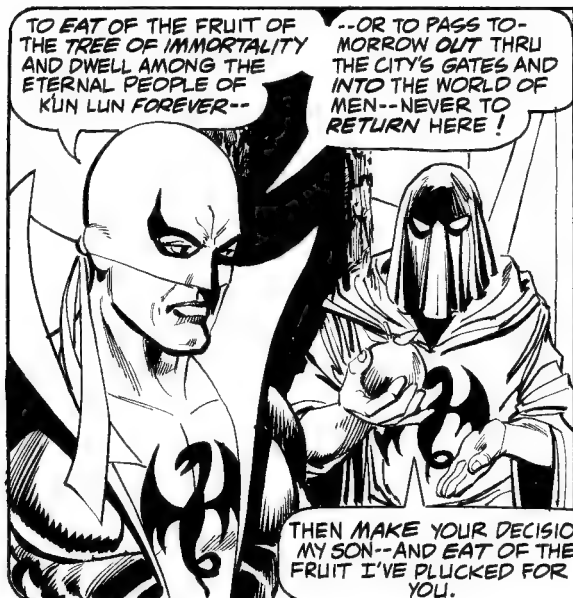
SHORTLY, IN THE ANCIENT CITY'S SPRAWLING PLAZA...

YOU KNOW THE LEGEND OF OUR CITY, DANIEL--HOW THE K'UN LUN MOUNTAIN APPEARS IN THE WORLD OF MEN FOR ONLY ONE DAY OUT OF EVERY TEN YEARS!

ON SUCH A DAY YOU FIRST CAME TO US-- AND ON SUCH A DAY YOU MAY LEAVE-- IF SUCH IS YOUR WISH--

THEN MY CHOICE IS GREATER THAN I SUPPOSED, O YU-TI!

--FOR TOMORROW IS THAT MOST SACRED DAY IN A DECADE!





YOU THRUST
OUT A
HAND--

--STEEL-CABLE MUSCLES
HALT THE DESCENDING
BLADE--



--AND YOU CONCENTRATE--
DRAWING THE BLOOD TO YOUR
BRAIN--FORCING YOURSELF
BACK TO TOTAL AWARENESS--

SMOOTH MOVE, JOKER--
DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD
THAT ONE STILL IN
YOU!

THEN THE MAN CALLED
SCYTHE TIGHTENS HIS
GRIP ON THE CHAIN--
AND THIS TIME YOU
ALLOW YOURSELF TO
BE PULLED OFF--
BALANCE.



FOR AN INSTANT, THE
TENSION ON THE
CHAIN GROWS SLACK--

THRUM!

--AND, IN THAT
INSTANT--YOU
ACT!



BUT YOUR LEATHER-GARBED OPPONENT
DOES NOT LET GO OF THE CHAIN!

MAN, YOU'RE JUST
FULL OF SURPRISES,
AREN'T YOU, JOKER?

WELL, I'LL JUST
HAVE TO MAKE
SURE YOU DON'T
PULL THAT ONE
AGAIN!

YOU
ANTICIPATE
SCYTHE'S MOVE,
YOUR ROCK-HARD
FINGERS
STRIVING
DESPERATELY
TO PRY THE
FORGED
STEEL
GARROTE
FROM YOUR
NECK--



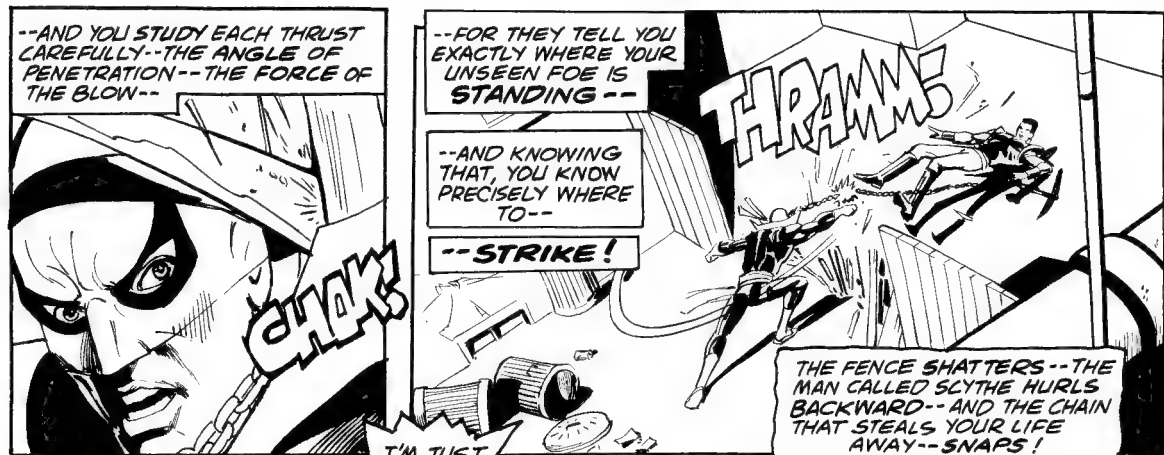
--BUT YOUR
EFFORTS SEEM
ONLY TO PULL
IT THAT MUCH
TIGHTER!

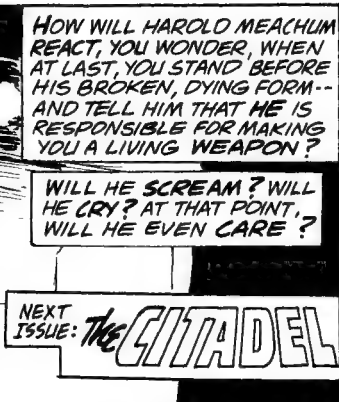


AN INVOLUNTARY **GURGLE**
ESCAPES YOUR CONSTRICTED
THROAT--AND SCYTHE GRINS
AS HE WHIPS YOU INTO THE
SPLINTERED FENCE--

I LET YOU
GET THOSE
HANDS
ON ME--
AND I'VE
HAD IT!

--BUT THAT'S
A LITTLE
PROBLEM
I CAN EASILY
SOLVE!





Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**™

RETREAT

GUESTING...
THE
MACABRE
**MAN-
THING**

by

STEVE ENGLEHART
Author,

PAUL GULACY
Artist

AL MILGROM, Inks
ORZECZOWSKI, Letters
STAN G., Colors
ROY THOMAS, Editor



FEATURING CHARACTERS
CREATED BY SAX ROHMER

"WHAT MANNER OF MONSTER *IS* THIS, WHICH MOVES SO SUDDENLY IN MY PATH?



"AS THE SON OF FU MANCHU, I HAVE BEEN WITNESS TO MUCH--



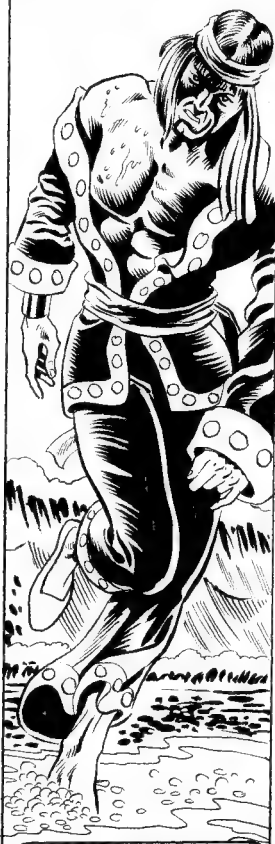
"--BUT NEVER ANYTHING THE LIKE OF *THIS*.



"WHAT CAN BE THIS CREATURE'S *ROLE*--



"--IN THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH HAS NOW OCCUPIED TWELVE HOURS OF MY LIFE.



"...WHICH *BEGAN*, WITH PERFECT SYMMETRY BENEATH THE FLORIDA SUN.



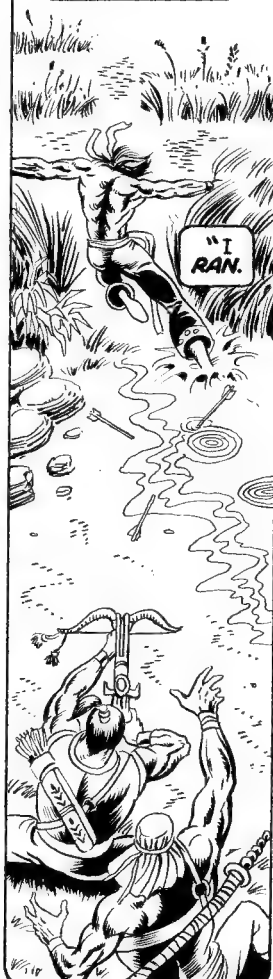
"I HAD SWUM A *GREAT* DISTANCE ALONG THE FLORIDA COAST, TO ESCAPE THE *VENGEANCE* OF FU MANCHU--



"-- BUT I HAD NOT SWUM FAR ENOUGH.



"I WAS *WEARY*, AND THEY WERE *ARMED*.



"I *RAN*.



"ONLY MILES INLAND, I ABRUPTLY PLUNGED INTO A DENSE AND STEAMING SWAMPLAND. HERE WERE MANY FORMS OF DANGER NEW TO MY KNOWLEDGE--

-- BUT NONE WERE AS CERTAIN AS THE MEN AT MY BACK.

"I HAD OBSERVED MY TWO PURSUERS AS THEY HOVERED AROUND MY FATHER--

--AND THEY WERE MOST ASSUREDLY MASTER ASSASSINS.



HIS SLIPPER! PERHAPS SHANG-CHI HAS SUCCEumbed TO THESE "EVERGLADES."

IMPOSSIBLE, JEKIN. IMPOSSIBLE.



"NO MATTER HOW I UTILIZED MY SKILLS TO CONFUSE AND ELUDE THESE MEN--

--THEY CLUNG TO ME LIKE THE LEECHES OF THE MARSH.

"IN THE TENTH HOUR, I SUDDENLY HEARD THEM--VERY NEAR--

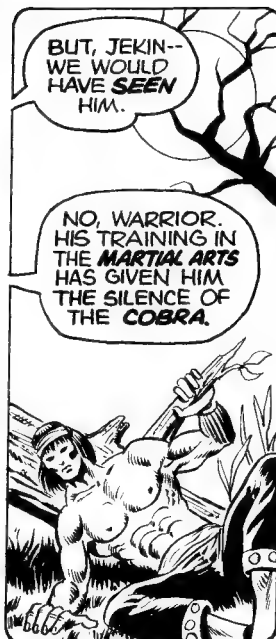


"--SO I SWIFTLY AND SUBTLY BECAME ONE WITH MY SURROUNDINGS.

DO YOU SEE HIM, JEKIN?



NO, DAHAR! I BELIEVE HE TURNED UPON HIS TRACK.



BUT, JEKIN--WE WOULD HAVE SEEN HIM.

NO, WARRIOR. HIS TRAINING IN THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS GIVEN HIM THE SILENCE OF THE COBRA.



HERE, DAHAR! I HAVE HIM!

"I WAS A **FOOL!** OBVIOUSLY, DAHAR NUMBERED **MIMICRY** AMONG HIS ATTRIBUTES--

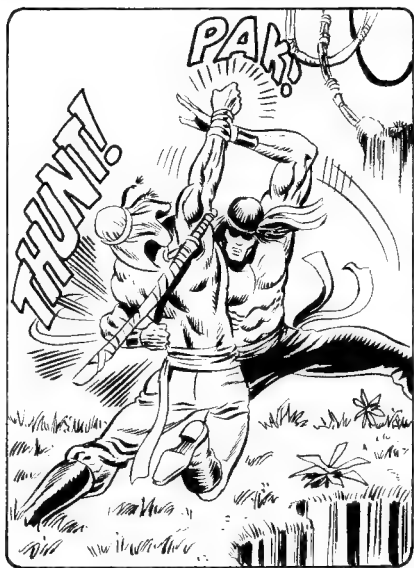
"--AND HAD SPOKEN **BOTH** VOICES, TO DRAW MY **CREDULOUS** ATTENTION--

"--BUT I KNEW **THEN** THAT **ALL** MY SKILLS WOULD BE **NONE TOO MUCH** IN MY TERRIBLE BATTLE FOR **SURVIVAL**--

"--WHILE **JEKIN** APPROACHED ME FROM **BEHIND!**

"MY FOOT ENSURED THAT JEKIN COULD NOT PROPERLY **PRESS** HIS ADVANTAGE--

"--AND AT THAT MOMENT, DAHAR WAS **UPON** ME!









"HANDS GRASP MY ANKLES!"



"THE MONSTER LUMBERS ON, UNKNOWING..."

"...WHILE I AM **PULLED**, WITH A GREAT FLOWING MOTION, COMPLETELY **THROUGH** THE CREATURE."

"MY RESCUER SAYS NOT A **WORD**."



"PLEASE. I NEED **HELP**."



"BUT HE RUNS **PAST** ME! WHAT MANNER OF MAN REFUSES **ANOTHER** MAN'S PLEA FOR **AID**?"

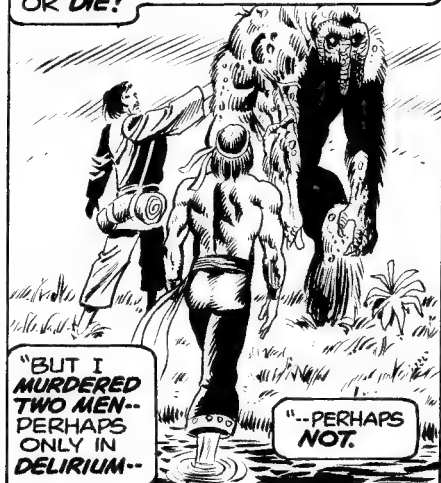
"YET-- I AM TOO **HASTY**."



"HE SEES TO THE **CREATURE'S** WELFARE BEFORE **MINE**."

"THE CREATURE SEEMS **UNCHANGED** BY-- PERHAPS EVEN **UNWARE** OF-- MY DELIRIOUS ATTACK UPON IT. **GOOD**."

"I-- HAVE NEVER RATIONALLY WANTED ANYTHING TO BECOME INJURED-- OR DIE!"



"BUT I MURDERED TWO MEN-- PERHAPS ONLY IN DELIRIUM--"

"--PERHAPS NOT."

I AM CALLED **LU SUN**.

I SAW YOU WERE IN NO DANGER AFTER BEING FREED, SO I LOOKED TO THE MORE **UNUSUAL** BEING.



I AM CALLED **SHANG-CHI**. I AM IN NEED OF REST, TO DRIVE A **POISON** FROM MY BODY.

PERHAPS I MAY AID YOU **FURTHER**.

I HAVE **MIS-**JUDGED YOU, BUT I AM **GRATEFUL** FOR YOUR AID.



"HE TURNS EASILY, AND TREADS **UNHESITATINGLY** AWAY. I MUST FOLLOW."

"MY MIND IS MORE **COHERENT** NOW. THE RED-INDIGO WAVE OF DELIRIUM IS **ROLLING BACK**, ITS **CONFUSION**, **FORTUNATELY**, ONLY **MOMENTARY**."

"I CAME UPON THE CREATURE AFTER MY HOURS OF **FLIGHT**, **DEBILITATED** BY THE **DRUG**, AND PERCEIVED IT A **MONSTER**."



"AS IT **REACHED** FOR ME, MY ILLNESS **DIVERTED** MY THOUGHTS--"



"--FOR A **FEW SEC-**ONDS AT MOST. **NEVERTHELESS**, IT IS AN **UNSETTLING** EXPERIENCE."



"AH -- I HEAR THE CREATURE BEGIN TO **SPLASH** ALONG **BEHIND** US."



"I DID NOT **WISH** TO **ATTACK** IT. **PERHAPS**, **SOMEHOW**, IT **KNOWS**."



"AFTER A LENGTH OF TIME, WE REACH A GLADE.



REST.

UPON THIS SMALL ISLAND, YOU MAY SIT--

--AND HIDE FROM THE TWO MEN WHO YET HUNT YOU.



I WATCHED FROM A DISTANCE AS THEY CLIMBED FROM THE BOG INTO WHICH YOU HURLED THEM. THEIR INJURIES WERE SLIGHT.

LU SUN... HOW IS IT THAT A MAN-- WITH MANY YEARS OF LIVING-- MAY DESIRE THE DEATH OF HIS SON?



HOW COULD HE LIE TO AN INNOCENT AND CALL IT TRUTH?



HONORABLE FATHER, ONE OF THE OTHER STUDENTS HAS SAID TO ME THAT YOU WORK NOT TO BENEFIT THE WORLD... BUT TO RULE IT.

A VICIOUS SLANDER, SHANG-CHI. YOU MAY BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THIS FANCY CONTAINS NOT A GRAIN OF TRUTH.

WHICH STUDENT COULD IMAGINE SUCH A THING?

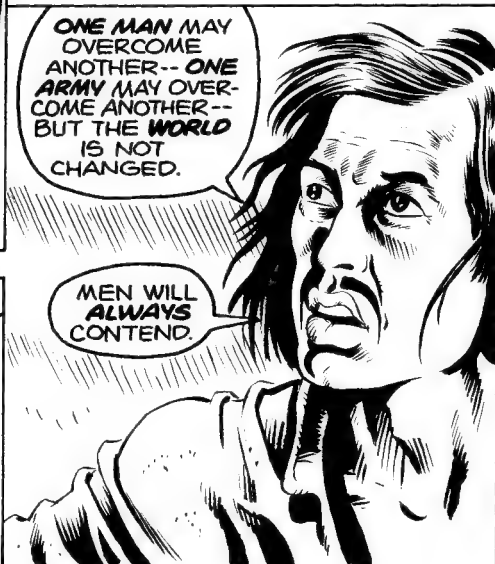
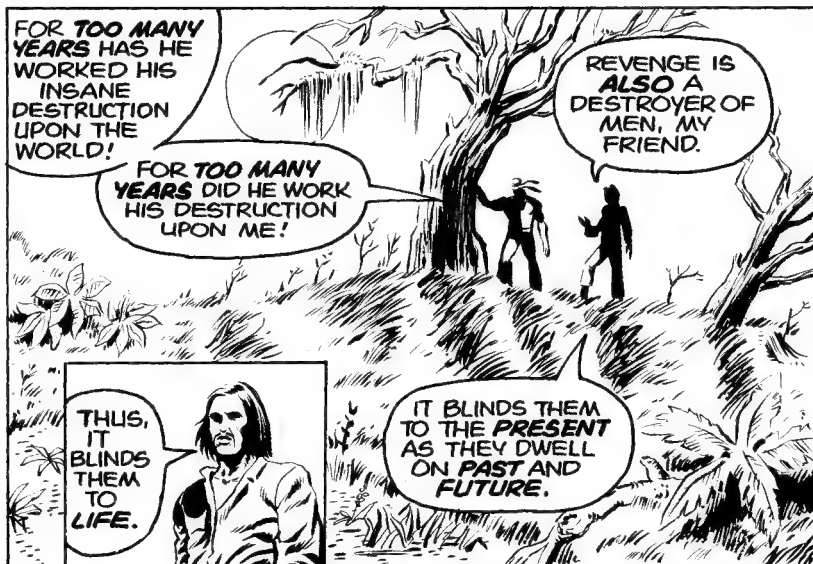
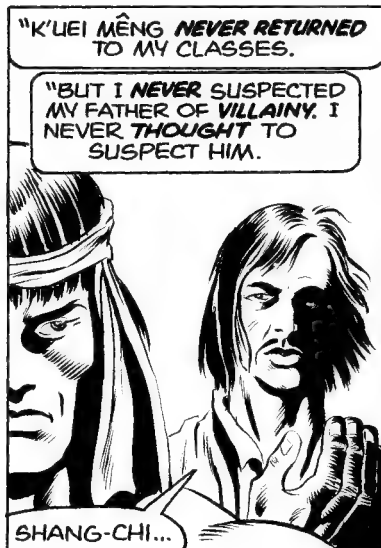


K'UEI MENG. HE OFTEN INVENTS TALES.

IT IS HIS WAY. HE LIVES IN DREAMS. I MUST LEARN.



I THANK YOU, FATHER, FOR SPEAKING WITH ME!





AT THIS
MOMENT,
IN ANOTHER
PART OF
THE EVER-
GLADES...

...A SLITHERING FILE OF DRONING
LORRIES RUNS FURTIVELY BEFORE
THE PALE SWAMP MOON.

WITHIN THE LEAD VAN
SITS A TALL MAN, HIS
SHADOW-FLECKED FACE
IMMOBILE, EVEN TO THE
GLAZED GREEN EYES
GLOWING UNMISTAKABLY
IN THE GLOOM.



IT IS THE
DEVIL DOCTOR,
FU MANCHU.

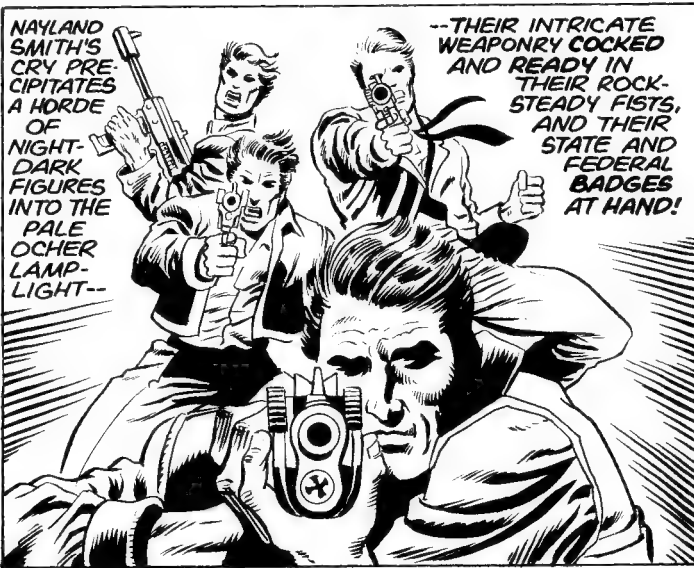
HIS LORRIES WERE
TO HAVE BEEN FILLED
WITH MIMOSA-TAINTED GAS-
OLINE, BUT FU MANCHU'S
SON DETERMINED
OTHERWISE. NOW
THEY ROLL EMPTY
DOWN DESERTED
BACK TRAILS--

--OR, PERHAPS...
NOT SO DESERTED.



NOW,
YOU
MEN!

STRIKE
NOW!



NAYLAND
SMITH'S
CRY PRE-
CIPITATES
A HORDE
OF
NIGHT-
DARK
FIGURES
INTO THE
PALE
OCHER
LAMP-
LIGHT--

--THEIR INTRICATE
WEAPONRY COCKED
AND READY IN
THEIR ROCK-
STEADY FISTS,
AND THEIR
STATE AND
FEDERAL
BADGES
AT HAND!

THE MASTER OF THE SI-FAN'S
MEN GIVE THEIR REPLY!

KAPOW! KAPOW!
KRAK!
KRAK!
KRAK!

SUDDENLY, FRAMED IN A
STITCHWORK OF SCREAM-
ING DEATH--

--BLACK JACK TARR
COMES RACING TOWARD
THE LEAD VAN!



NAVLAND SMITH'S
AIDE-DE-CAMP
USUALLY PRE-
FERS THE
DIRECT ROUTE!



COME
QUIETLY,
DOCTOR,
OR I'LL --

HE'S
GONE!



--VANISHED-- FROM AN
ENCLOSED TRUCK THAT WAS
ALWAYS IN FULL VIEW!



HOW
COULD
THE
FIEND
HAVE
MANAGED
IT?



...WHO WILL NEVER GREET **OLD AGE**.



"OBVIOUSLY, THEIR **ATTACK** OCCURS NEXT, AND I TWIST **FISH-LIKE** TO AVOID THEIR **PRECISION**."



"THE WORDS OF LU SUN HAVE BEEN **FEW**, YET CHARGED WITH **QUIET INSIGHT**. HE IS THE **FIRST PERSON** WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO **SPEAK** REGARDING MY LIFE --"



"--AND THE **CON-TENTION** WITH JEKIN AND DAHAR BECOMES QUITE **DIFFERENT** FROM OUR EARLIER ENCOUNTERS."

"I AM NO **MORE** SKILLFUL, AND THEY NO **LESS**, BUT I HAVE BECOME THE **STRONGEST**."



"THEY **KNOW** THIS, **INSTINCTIVELY**, AND THEIR ACTIONS NOW ACQUIRE THE SHRILL EDGE OF **FRENZY**. I AM EVER MORE **FLUID**--



"--BUT EVEN AT **THAT**, I CANNOT KNOW OF HIDDEN--

"--QUICKSAND!



"MY FOOT **HOLDS** ME, MUCH AS DID THE **SWAMP-CREATURE** IN MY MADNESS--

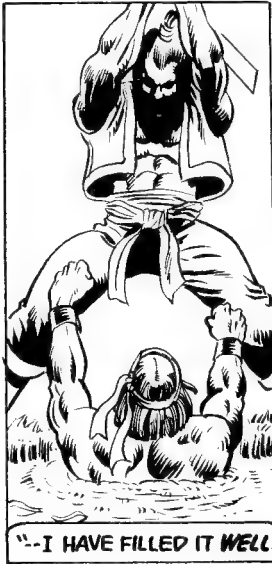
"--AND NOW, **ALL** SUPPORT GIVES WAY, PLUNGING ME TO MY **HIPS** IN THE CHURNING, CLINGING POOL.



"YET MY THOUGHTS CONTINUE CALMLY, UNIMPAIRED.



"IF MY LIFE ENDS HERE, THRU **SWAMP** OR **SWORD**--



"--I HAVE FILLED IT WELL.



WHA--?

"IT IS THE **SWAMP-CREATURE**, COME SHUFFLING FROM THE STEAMING DARKNESS, FOR REASONS I MAY NEVER **UNDERSTAND**.

"MY TWO OPPONENTS TURN AS **ONE** TOWARD THE BEHEMOTH, AND RESPOND TO THEIR **FIRST SIGHT** OF IT MUCH AS I DID. ITS MISSHAPEN BULK CAUSES **WONDERMENT**, **AWE**--

"--AND IN THESE **HUNTERS**, MINDS **ALREADY** FIRED WITH THE BLOOD-LUST, IT AROUSES A **NEED** FOR **DESTRUCTION**.



NO! DO NOT TOUCH IT--FOR YOUR **BRAVADO** IS FOUNDED IN **FEAR**--

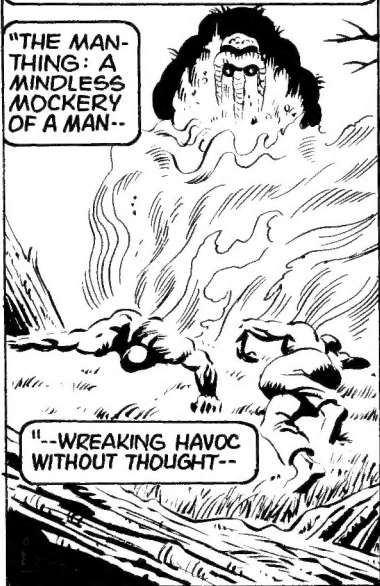
--AND IN MY TRAVELS, I HAVE HEARD IT SAID--



WHO SOEVER KNOWS FEAR-- BURNS AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH!

"THE MAN-THING. SO THE CREATURE HAS A RECOGNIZED IDENTITY IN THE WORLD.

"THE MAN-THING: A MINDLESS MOCKERY OF A MAN--



"--WREAKING HAVOC WITHOUT THOUGHT--

"--AND HOW AM I SO DIFFERENT?



"WHEN I HAVE CONTENTED AGAINST MY FATHER AND HIS ACOLYTES, I HAVE USED ONLY NECESSARY FORCE -- I HAVE NOT ABUSED MY SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF VIOLENCE --



"--BUT HAVE I NOT ABUSED THEM THROUGH USING THEM AT ALL?

LU SUN... WOULD YOU CONTENT AGAINST FU MANCHU?



WOULD YOU, SHANG-CHI?



"I HEAR THE BIRDS SINGING. DAWN HAS ARRIVED."

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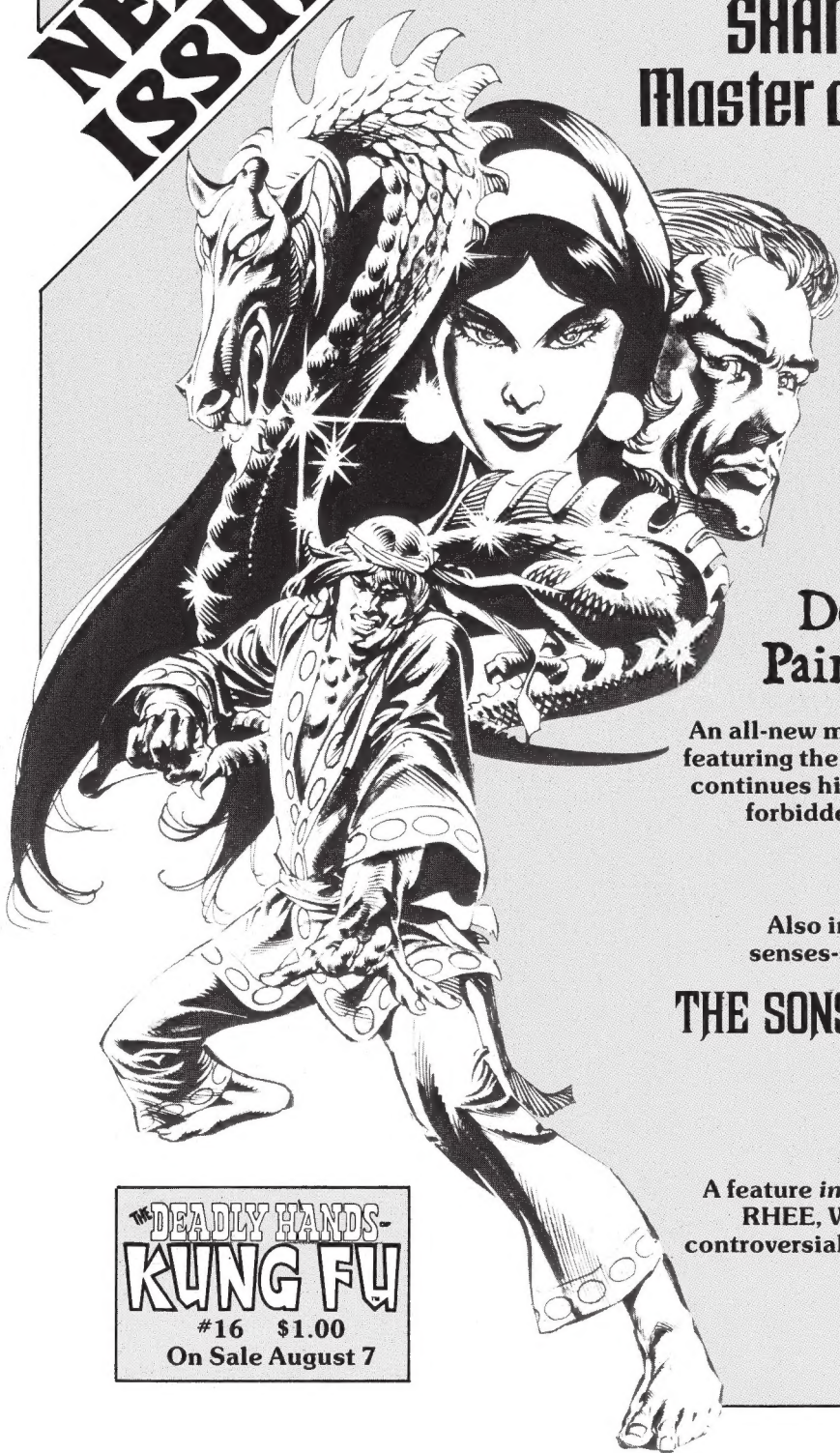
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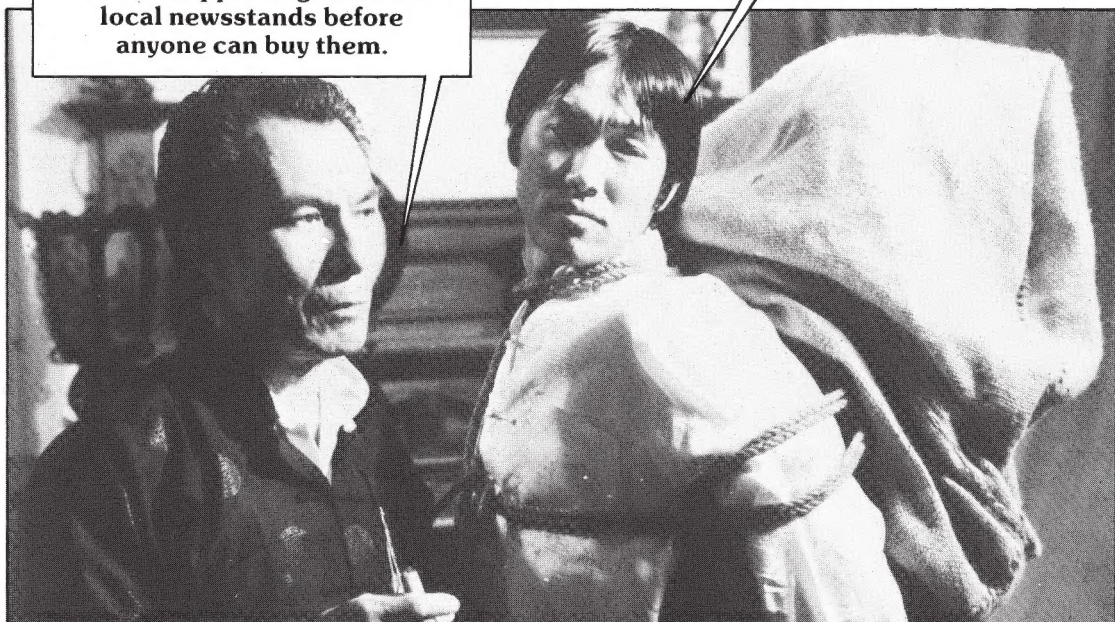


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Honk Honk!*



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